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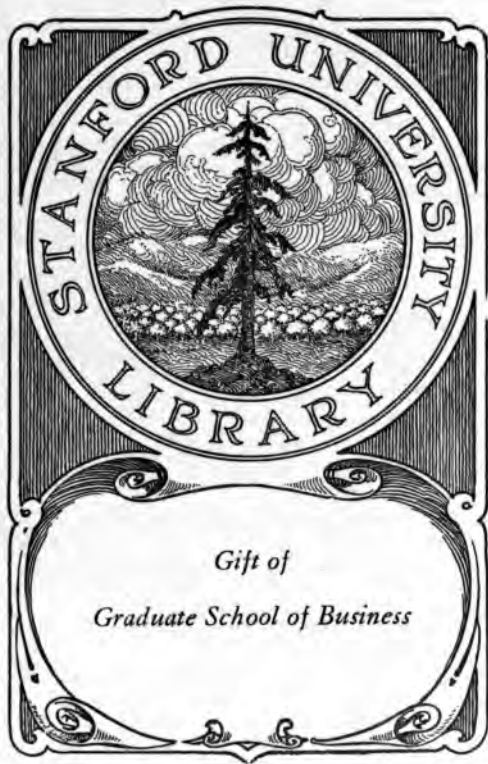
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THE LIFE  
OF  
EDMUND BURKE.

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THE SECOND EDITION,  
IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

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[Entered at Stationers-hall.]



THE LIFE  
OF  
EDMUND BURKE.

COMPREHENDING AN  
*IMPARTIAL ACCOUNT*  
OF HIS  
LITERARY AND POLITICAL EFFORTS,  
AND A  
*Sketch of the Conduct and Character*  
OF HIS MOST EMINENT  
ASSOCIATES, COADJUTORS, AND OPPONENTS.

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THE SECOND EDITION,  
IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

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*By* ROBERT BISSET, LL.D.

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# P R E F A C E

TO THE

SECOND. EDITION.

BEFORE I proceed to acknowledge my obligations to Gentlemen who have communicated to me materials for this second edition, it becomes me to discharge a prior debt of gratitude due to the public for its reception of the first. In my thanks I have the satisfaction to include readers of very different views and opinions. Those who have not concurred in my sentiments respecting the political conduct of my illustrious subject have done me the honour to approve of its literary execution.

The Monthly Reviewer, whose consideration the Life of Burke first engaged, en-

tered into the work with an accuracy and extent of analysis, a particularity of critical disquisition, to which I consider myself as peculiarly indebted, and from which I flatter myself he will perceive I have reaped great benefit. Though I cannot concur in his objections to Mr. Burke's consistency, I admit that his arguments are fair, candid, and strong, on the grounds which he takes.

The British Critic is, as he has always been, entitled to my peculiar gratitude. He will find that I have paid particular attention to his very important advice, and will see that the result is the difference which he anticipated.

The Reviewer of the Life of Burke, in the European Magazine, has expressed himself in terms so flattering, that I must impute them to the partiality of a friend, instead of the justice of an unbiassed judge. At the same time he displays such a degree

of ingenuity and vigour, that had I to plead a literary cause, I could not have an abler advocate.

To the Critical Reviewers I have been formerly much obliged ; and earnestly wish that, when it shall suit their convenience to take notice of either the last or present edition, I may meet with an equally favourable reception.

To the New Annual Register, issuing from the same house, I have to offer my thanks for their notice both of Burke's Life and my former productions. Considering diversity of opinion respecting the conduct of my subject as no expression of literary objection, the writer will find that I have admitted the justness of his only censure, in my endeavours to prevent its repetition.

The Monthly Magazine, with the same diversity of political sentiment as the New

Annual Register, has treated me with similar favour. The Monthly Mirror has a strong claim to my grateful acknowledgements for notice at once early and favourable. On the former ground I am also indebted to the Analytical Reviewer. That gentleman, I find, was offended that I called Mr. Lucas a demagogue apothecary. One part of my assertion I have discovered to be erroneous, as the said demagogue was a graduate doctor. With regard to the criticism, I must confess it was more favourable than I expected from that quarter; and, as to ability, taking for my guide *experience* instead of *speculation*, I did not look for it in the panegyrist of Paine. The late Analytical Reviewers may say, that I violate the maxim *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*. If not desirous of being consigned to oblivion, they must wish the rule to be violated.

‘ And who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,’ &c.

\* \* \* \* \*

‘ Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind.’

For new materials I have been indebted to various gentlemen. To Mr. Francis I am obliged for original letters and other valuable communications. The polite and handsome manner in which he honoured me with his acquaintance, greatly enhances the favour conferred by his contributions. Liberal in sentiment as well as vigorous in understanding, he did not refuse to promote the work, though containing some opinions and sentiments contrary to his own.

I here cannot forbear mentioning the fate of an application which I made to him, whom I ever must consider as one of the first men of this or any other age. In terms of the utmost respect I wrote to that gentleman, requesting that, from the vast stores of materials his long intimacy with Mr. Burke must have afforded him, he would have the goodness to communicate such as could have no reference to political sentiment. *I received no answer.*



From inferior retainers to Opposition such conduct would not have surprized me. It was natural for such, not having understanding sufficiently comprehensive to view the whole conduct and character of Mr. Burke, to confine themselves to a part, and to feel sore at his political separation from their party; but from the generous, magnanimous, expanded mind of him whom I addressed I expected a different reception.

To the conversation of Mr. Murphy I owe various anecdotes concerning Mr. Burke, and especially his early life, in the knowledge of which my first edition was confessedly deficient.

I was promised by an anonymous writer some important particulars concerning Mr. Burke's connection with Mr. Hamilton, and the causes of its dissolution; but though I attended repeatedly to the writer's appointment, I was never favoured with an inter-

view, nor the proffered communications. Should he read this Preface, I beg leave to inform him, that, though too late for this edition, I should still highly prize the information.

Many other gentlemen have favoured me with interesting materials.

But what I esteem most peculiarly important, has come from him who was, when a youth and a political theorist, by far the most ingenious and ablest of Mr. Burke's literary opponents, though now, when a man and a political philosopher, he has adopted opinions more consistent with those of the man whose character, able to comprehend and appreciate, he so much admires. The opportunities that gentleman had of being with Mr. Burke were but few, but of these he did avail himself to the utmost.

From a gentleman equally eminent for investigating the understanding and affections of the mind, as he whom I have just mentioned is for exhibiting man's various duties in private and public relations, I was favoured with important materials.

I have to apologize to the public for the lateness of the present edition, as, indeed, to supply the demand it ought to have been out in the beginning of last year; but the desire of procuring variety of intelligence induced me to postpone the publication.

Fresh communications will be most thankfully received for a future impression.

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THE LIFE  
OF  
EDMUND BURKE.

OF the various studies which occupy the attention of man, the wise esteem those the most important which unfold human nature, educe moral duty, and inculcate virtuous conduct. Hence history, which shews the connection between principle and action, action and consequence, derives its chief utility.—Not real history only, but its imitator, poetry, though pleasing from a variety of causes, is useful and interesting in proportion to its exhibition of moral nature, and those parts of physical by which the happiness of mankind is affected.

In history, whether real or imitative, we are more instructed by the developement of particular characters than of general mea-



asures; more interested in individual enjoyment and suffering, than in the prosperity or adversity of nations. Of history, therefore, the most instructing and most interesting kind is Biography. 'No species of history (says the sage Author of the RAMBLER) seems more worthy of cultivation than biography; since none can be more delightful or more useful, none can more certainly enchain the heart by irresistible interest, or more widely diffuse instruction to every diversity of condition.' Hence Johnson infers, that there has rarely passed a life, of which a judicious and faithful narrative would not be useful.

The facts which constitute the excellence of biography are of an evanescent kind, and rarely transmitted by tradition: they are often lost, unless carefully collected during the life, either of the subject or of his cotemporaries. It is of great importance, therefore, to procure the materials of biography while entire, and not impaired by time.

From the inattention of cotemporaries to the lives of some of our most eminent poets, the first biographer of modern times found only scanty materials. The public may regret that his knowledge of the life of Butler was not equal to that of the life of Savage. After a lapse of ages, such knowledge, however, was not attainable concerning those who had not found faithful and judicious biographers whilst the subject was recent and well known.

Lord Bacon observes, that history is either narrative or inductive: narrative, when recording facts; inductive, when recording facts to establish general principles. Narrative history is the foundation of inductive. We must know particular facts before we can deduce from them general conclusions.

This division holds respecting biography and every other species of history.

To collect useful facts, requires only industry, observation, and common judgment.

To compose an inductive history, or biography, requires much higher powers: yet the lower exertions are beneficial, in affording materials.

As no age has produced a greater number of eminent men than the present, should any future Johnson arise to write the history of Genius, it would not only be useful but necessary, in order to give his biography the full effect, that he should have an accurate account from those who lived at the time. No one individual can know *all* the facts which may form the materials of an entertaining and useful life. *Diversity of narratives*, if authentic, impartial, and not trivial, will tend to the great ends of biography. Although there be no such life of Johnson, as Johnson himself could have written on a similar subject, yet much advantage has accrued to society from different writers having undertaken an account of his life. From *several* writers, a much greater quantity and variety of important information is transmitted to posterity, than would have reached them from

the talents and industry of any one of his biographers. From the *result* of their labours, there are now sufficient materials to employ the pen of a man, possessing the requisite talents for biography:—a thorough knowledge of human nature, an acquaintance with that kind of situation in which the subject acted, and that species of talents which he exerted. From these only, combined with a detail of facts, such as can be had from none but cotemporaries, may a just view be formed of individual character.

Biography derives its principal advantage from the minute knowledge it affords of moral causes, their operation and effects; by enabling us to trace action to mind; the modifications, habits, and affections of mind to their sources, whether original or factitious; and thence deducing lessons of moral conduct. It is interesting, from displaying situations and passions which we can, by a small effort of the imagination, approximate to ourselves, the feelings of the father, son, husband, wife, and friend.

The interest arising from the view of the qualities, situation, feelings, actions, conduct, and characters of our species is often enhanced by circumstances peculiar to individuals, by individual powers, affections, and exertions, intellectual and moral; their direction, their effects on the happiness of the subject himself, of others, and particularly on our own. We admire extraordinary talents or qualities, we are interested in the history of such talents or qualities, producing important consequences to the welfare or hurt of mankind. We are most deeply affected by the history of men, the consequences of whose powers and conduct have extended to our own times and country. The lives of soldiers who have fought for us, of scholars who have informed, instructed, or delighted us, of statesmen whose measures and conduct are felt in our society, we read with peculiar *delight*. We wish to know every minute circumstance that can illustrate their characters, and are even pleased with those that are not in themselves material, because belonging to an interesting object.

Whether we consider genius, talents, knowledge, or their direction and effects on human affairs, and especially on those affairs in which we of this country are most particularly concerned, no man of modern times stands more eminently distinguished than EDMUND BURKE. It is not his genius only,—a genius of which we perceive the vast expanse, but cannot see the bounds;—a genius which, though it had not been cultivated by erudition, enlightened by knowledge, formed by philosophy, must by its own natural force have rendered its possessor infinitely superior to ordinary men, even with the advantages of education;—a genius not only grasping, but comprehending; not only comprehending, but *appropriating* almost every subject of human learning;—whatever it saw, occupying; whatever it occupied, possessing; whatever it possessed, employing;—which has rendered the character and history of this personage interesting and momentous. A very great part of its importance comes from the *direction* which his inclination, together with the circumstances

of the times, have given to his talents, and the consequences which they *have produced*, and *are producing*, to mankind. The *effects* could not have proceeded but from great *efficacy*: the efficacy might have existed without the effects.

Whether the effects are salutary or pernicious, it would be premature in me to assert, until, after a narrative of facts, I have adduced the reasons on which I may have formed an opinion. But those, who contend either the one or the other, concur in admitting that few or none have had, and still have, more influence on the welfare of mankind than EDMUND BURKE.

*According to the censurers of this great man—* his recent writings and eloquence afford the most extraordinary instance of powers of the first magnitude misapplied to the most hurtful purposes, and producing the most lamentable effects. He repressed the increasing spirit of liberty, which, if allowed to operate, would have produced in these

realms a reform of abuses and corruptions, becoming daily more numerous, more extensive, and more destructive. His writings and eloquence were the means of obstructing the improving exertions of unfettered *Reason*, and of again binding her in the chains of authority, prejudice, priestcraft, and tyranny. He stirred up an abhorrence of the French revolution, an alarm against all principles of freedom, because their abuse or excess, arising from circumstances not necessarily connected with them, had produced disorders. Through his writings, eloquence, and influence, incidental excesses were identified with liberty itself. Emancipation from civil and ecclesiastical slavery was reprobated, because resentment for long suffered and long felt oppression had stimulated violence against the oppressors. Monarchical, aristocratical, and clerical usurpers were defended; and were not only defended, but represented as martyrs in the cause of virtue and religion, when deprived of that power which they had never any right to possess. It was he that broke the WHIG PHALANX, indisposed men of rank



and property to a reform, which, before abuses were arrived at such a height, many of them had deemed absolutely necessary to the salvation of the constitution. Having rendered the majority of his countrymen inimical to the French republic, and to the principles of liberty which had given it being, he prepared them for hostilities against France and Freedom, and for joining the combination of despots. In short, according to the party in opposition to Government, Mr. Burke prevented the reform of abuses, which had increased, were increasing, and unless speedily removed, must ruin the country ; and by changing the sentiments of Britons, and exciting a hatred and alarm against the dissemination of freedom, of which he once had been the zealous champion, caused a war, in principle absurd, unjust, and inexpedient ; in event disgraceful and disastrous ; in its consequences pregnant with destruction.

Such is the opinion the opponents of the present Administration, whether high or low, learned or ignorant, able or weak,—from a

Lauderdale, an Erskine, a Sheridan, and a Fox, down to a Jones, a Thelwall, and a Godwin—entertain of the recent conduct of Burke and its consequences.\*

*According to the admirers of Burke's recent conduct*—he affords an instance of the greatest energy, employed in effecting the most beneficial purposes. His writings, eloquence, and wisdom, recalled Britain from the deluding errors of visionary theories, to the salutary lessons of experience; from the abstraction of metaphysics and the falsities of fanciful hypothesis, to the contemplation of their actual state of welfare and happiness; demonstrated to them the evils to which rage for innovation was leading its votaries; taught them not to prefer possible, but very improbable, acquirement to certain possession; persuaded them to look to their own history and experience, and not

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\* In the former edition I here inserted the name of Mr. Mackintosh. From his late publication, I conceive his opinion concerning the French revolution is changed, *since its effects have so completely unfolded its nature.*

to the mischievous speculations of their neighbours. Seeing the increasing disposition in many individuals to sacrifice the constitution, and consequently the happiness of their country, to revolutionary doctrines, he warned them of the misery which they were ignorantly seeking; he excited the majority of men of talents, influence, and interest in the state, to vigilance and vigour in preserving their country. He, from the first symptoms, fully comprehended the nature of the disease, and prognosticated its dreadful effects; stopped the infection from spreading in his own country, by prescribing efficacious preventives, and causing all communication to be cut off with the country in which the pestilence was raging. His genius was the agent of wisdom, his wisdom the minister of patriotism. He was the bulwark of the British constitution, of rational liberty, and of property; the champion who drove back the flames of Jacobinism from our battlements and fortresses; the preserver of our church and state in the various orders and gradations of their com-

ponent members, the securer of internal tranquillity and happiness; whose energy was the principal source of vigour in external measures necessary to save this country from being over-run by French politics, and even dependent on French power; measures which, though they have failed of complete success, as to continental affairs, yet have saved the constitution, and preserved the independence of Britain.

Such is the opinion entertained of Burke by the approvers of the present system and plans of Government.

Those who do not concur in every particular of either the praise or the censure of this personage with the supporters or opponents of Administration, agree with both in ascribing the prevention of change and the continuance of the present system,—whether, on the whole, good or bad—the war, whether, on the whole, right or wrong,—chiefly to the powers of Edmund Burke.

As in the general estimation, he is the author of effects the most momentous to mankind,—even had his influence never been felt in the former part of his life, had he been totally inactive during the American contest and at every other period previous to the French revolution, had he never before been distinguished as a genius, a scholar, an orator, a politician, a philosopher,—his history and character must be highly important and interesting to Britons and to mankind. But it is not as a literary and political man alone that a biographer is to regard Burke. By following him to the retirement of civil and domestic life,—by viewing him as a neighbour, a companion, a friend, a brother, an associate, a private member of the community, as a husband, a father, a master of a family,—we must reap the highest intellectual and moral instruction, and interest the best affections.

The course of general study had led the writer of this sketch to a close contemplation of the literary efforts and character of Burke.

Special objects combined with general study in producing a still closer attention to his political exertions, and leading me to consider them both in detail and principle ; to examine the parts both severally and as members of a whole system. Anxious to know the civil and domestic life of a personage, whose literary and political talents are so eminent, the writer had, for the first edition, spared no pains to procure authentic information concerning his private engagements, relations, habits, temper, manners, and conduct. Since the publication his diligence has been stimulated by the success of the work, and encouraged by spontaneous communications from gentlemen of eminence, to whom he was before a stranger.

The first quality of biography is authenticity. A biographer and an historian, like any other witness, is bound to speak, as far as he knows it, the truth, all the truth, and nothing but the truth ; regarding fact only, not the *consequences* of the narration to the *character* of its subject. A necessary con-

stituent of authenticity is impartiality. If a writer set out with a predisposition either to praise or to censure, he is apt to lose sight of truth ; to bend facts to a favourite hypothesis.\*

It has been asserted, in a preface to some posthumous publications of Burke, that *consistency* marks every part of his conduct. The writer of this Life is neither the FRIEND nor the ENEMY of Burke: neither *assumes* that he was consistent nor inconsistent, but will *impartially narrate* every fact which he deems illustrative of his talents and character. He will endeavour to ascribe the due merit to his extraordinary excellencies ; also to notice his defects—as from such he, in common with all men, was not exempt. He

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\* I have been charged in two periodical performances, one of great eminence, the other by no means so distinguished, with endeavouring to warp truth, that I may establish the consistency of Burke. As not only the *Monthly Magazine*, but even the MONTHLY REVIEW has adduced no arguments which prove his *inconsistency*, I cannot help still adhering to my conclusion; and withholding my assent to their affirmation until justified by proof.

who should exhibit *one side only* is an advocate, not an historian; and not a very judicious advocate, because so easily to be convicted of partiality. Neither a friend nor an enemy is the fittest for writing a true life. The friend is apt to become a panegyrist, the enemy a satirist: the former to overcharge the good, and sink the bad; the latter to overcharge the bad, and sink the good. Truth is either lost in the blaze of admiration, or perverted by the misrepresentation of malignancy.

To narrative\* biography only (according to Lord Bacon's distinction) does the author pretend, and arrogates to himself no qualities beyond those which it requires;—knowledge

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\* A reviewer,\* whose criticisms I much respect, contends that I am far from adhering to mere narration, and that my statements are made for the sake of establishing the consistency of Mr. Burke. Were this conjecture right, I should certainly have risen to *inductive* biography. I deny that my narration was presented *for the purpose* assigned; although I think that any impartial and accurate account of the life must lead to the establishment of consistency as one part of his character.

\* The Monthly for August, 1798, art. 1.



of important facts, veracity and impartiality in recording them. With his information on the subject, and his determined adherence to authenticity, he hopes he may be able to exhibit, if not a finished, a true account of this illustrious personage; and may afford many useful materials to future biographers of greater talents and skill.

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EDMUND BURKE was born in the city of Dublin,\* January 1st, 1730. He derived his descent from a respectable family. His father was of the Protestant persuasion, and by profession an attorney, of considerable ability and extensive practice. Young Edmund received the first part of his classical education under Mr. Abraham Shackleton, a quaker, who kept an academy at Ballytore, near Carlow. Mr. Shackleton was a very skilful and successful teacher, and at his school were educated many who became considerable in their country.

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\* His father for some time resided at Limerick; from which it has been erroneously asserted that Edmund was born there.

Under the tuition of this master, Burke devoted himself with great ardour, industry, and perseverance, to his studies, and laid the foundation of a classical erudition, which alone would have entitled ordinary men to the character of great scholars, but constituted a very small proportion of his multifarious knowledge. His classical learning was the learning of a philosopher, not of a pedant. He considered the ancient languages not as arrangements of measures, but as keys to ancient thoughts, sentiments, imagery, knowledge, and reasoning. \*

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\* I had the following anecdote from a respectable Irish gentleman, who vouches for its authenticity; it shews that the *versatility* of Burke's genius, which was so astonishing in manhood, displayed itself in early youth. Mr. Shackleton, one day that the assizes were held at Carlow, permitted his scholars to have a holiday to see the procession, on condition that the elder boys should give a description in Latin verse of the objects which they had been viewing, with their own impressions from them. Edmund gave a very full and able description of what he had beheld. A school-fellow, whose exercises he often composed for him, applied, but too late for Burke to bestow any serious attention on the application; and having his ideas nearly exhausted by diversity of exercises for his many applicants, he tried to get some hints from the youth in question; but found that he

Johnson observes, that there is not an instance of any man whose history has been minutely related, that did not in every part of his life discover the same proportion of intellectual vigour. Though, perhaps, this as a general position may admit of modifications, it is certain that Burke, from even boyish days, manifested a distinguished superiority over his contemporaries. He was the pride of his master, who foreboded every thing great from his genius.

He regarded his preceptor with a respect and gratitude which did honour to both. For near forty years that he went annually to Ireland, he travelled many miles to pay him a visit. Mr. Shackleton lived to a good

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had observed no object but a fat piper, with a brown coat. Edmund, accordingly, began in doggerel Latin :

*‘ Piper erat fatus qui brownum tegmen habebat :’*

and went on through many verses in the same style as the *Polemonidinia* of the celebrated Scotch bard, Drummond\* of Hawthornden.

\* Mr. Drummond’s representative is Captain Francis Drummond, of Brompton-row ; a gentleman who, though he has not exerted his powers in writing poetry, is, in point of acuteness and force of understanding, a descendant worthy of so ingenious and able an ancestor.

old age, and was succeeded by his son, Mr. John Shackleton, under whom the school continued to flourish. From Mr. John Shackleton it descended to his son, Mr. Abraham Shackleton, who is its present master, with no less reputation and success than his father and grandfather.

Burke's brother, Richard, who abounded in vivacity and pointed wit, was, by many esteemed, in their boyish days, the abler of the two: as, among superficial judges, boys are rated according to the vivacity, not the *force* of their intellectual qualities and operations; by the quickness of the vegetation more than the value of the production. Hence the fruits of ripened manhood are often very different from the appearance of juvenile blossom.

Of the comparative merits of the two brothers, both their master and father entertained a very different opinion from that which others had conceived. They allowed that Richard was bright, but maintained

that Edmund would be wise. The event justified their opinion. Richard was quick and acute ; Edmund perspicacious, comprehensive, inventive, and energetic. Of the two, Richard would have been the better writer of epigrams, Edmund of epic poetry.

Leaving school, he was sent to Dublin College. In 1746 he was a scholar of the house, which is a similar appointment to that of being a scholar of Christ-Church, Oxford. Goldsmith, in conversation, often asserted that Burke did not render himself very eminent in the performance of his academical exercises. Dr. Leland, who was also his contemporary, has declared the same. This assertion of these gentlemen has been confirmed by others, and never contradicted.

When we consider the immense extent and variety of his knowledge, we may fairly infer, that even in his youth he must have laid in great stores, though without display. That many young men of talents are at College eclipsed, by more emulous inferiors, in established exercises, is certainly true ; that

they themselves and their fellow students, and sometimes even their masters, estimate general ability by a specific direction, often happens. Imperfect knowledge will apply erroneous criteria, and consequently draw wrong conclusions. By many, not only boys but men, talents are rated by the facility of combining Latin and Greek syllables in a certain order, instead of the facility of knowing and explaining difficult and important truths. But penetration will discover talents, though not employed in customary details.

It is of the greatest importance in a history of an extraordinary mind, to mark, as far as possible, the progression of its powers, exertions, and attainments; the discipline or direction which may have had an effect on them; *quibus initiis quo progressu, usque eo creverit*. What was chiefly attended to at Dublin when he was at the University was the logic of the schools. That species of logic which seeks truth by investigation and induction, had not made its way in Dublin so completely as to expel the absurd system

by the *misinterpreters* of the Stagyrite dignified with the name of Aristotelian.\* The vigorous and penetrating mind of Burke, even in his juvenile years, saw the absurdity of the scholastic jargon, and slighted it as much as his friend Johnson had formerly done the lectures of his Oxford tutor. Men of great talents, both those who have been placed at universities and those who have not, after the elementary studies, chiefly form themselves: and, in following the plans of their own choice, often neglect those of prescription. Johnson, though proud of his College, did not devote himself to academical exercises with a zeal and perseverance proportionate to his genius. Dryden at Cambridge obtained no honorary degree. High as these men are, to rise much higher, Milton was not peculiarly ambitious of College distinction. Bacon, when his contemporaries were exercising themselves in the controversies of (what they called) Aristotelian logic, and

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\* See Gillies's analysis of Aristotle's Speculative Works; in which the learned writer shews that the SAGE inculcated investigation; also the Ethics and Politics, in which he uniformly reasons from experience and induction.

striving for victory in moods and figures, was engaged in proving the futility of the dialectics of the schools, and in finding out a certain road to truth. Common minds pursue the beaten tract: great genius either FINDS OR MAKES A WAY.

It was by this untrammelled exertion of his own powers, that Burke's juvenile studies at once enriched, invigorated, and expanded his mind. In recording his pursuits at College, I do not mean to recommend them to the imitation of young readers; nor to derogate from the utility of the modes established in any of the universities of these kingdoms. Systems of education are to be estimated by their tendency and effect in forming and directing the powers of young men in general, not of such as rarely appear in an age.

Mathematics were also much attended to at Dublin. Although Burke applied himself so much to that branch of study as to give him a competent knowledge of those parts that were most subservient to the purposes



of life, there is no evidence that he devoted himself to the more abstruse and profound parts of the science. It is probable, that, had he studied at Cambridge, he might not have attained the highest, or even one of the highest, class of degrees. According to the language of that university, he most probably might have rested contented with the honour of *senior optimo*; whilst the degree of *wrangler* would have been reserved for men of inferior talents, but more emulously diligent in the performance of prescribed tasks, and in the acquirement of a prescribed knowledge. His genius was too powerful to be stimulated by the common motive of emulation. Emulation can only operate where there is an approach to equality. Among many men of great ability, how few there are to be found in a century who approach to an equality to Edmund Burke! He gained no prizes, for he sought none. His mind was of too enlarged and original a cast, to be directed in its exertions by merely predated studies; it formed itself. It is well ascertained, that though he paid no more

attention to his College exercises than was merely necessary to avoid censure, while at the university, pursuing his own plans, he acquired a very extensive knowledge of physical and moral nature. Logic he also studied in the efficacious mode which Bacon pointed out. Pneumatology,\* in general, occupied a considerable portion of his attention. While attending to acquirement he was not negligent respecting the means of communication. He studied rhetoric and composition, as well as logic, physics, history, and moral philosophy.

In the year 1749, Lucas, a demagogue apothecary, wrote a number of very daring papers against Government, and acquired as great popularity at Dublin as Mr. Wilkes

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\* A respectable critic has objected to my frequent use of this word. My reason for employing it is, that I do not know any one word exactly synonymous, by which I could express the idea I mean to convey. The Monthly Review suggests *metaphysics* as of the same import; but I must beg leave to observe, that metaphysics signifies the properties of *being in general*; pneumatology of *certain classes of being*. Metaphysics is synonymous to ontology, but not to pneumatology.

afterwards did in London. Burke, whose principal attention had been directed to more important objects than scholastic logic, perceived the noxious tendency of levelling doctrines. He wrote in the same year several essays in the style of Lucas, imitating it so completely as to deceive the public:—pursuing Lucas's principles to consequences obviously resulting from them, and at the same time shewing their absurdity and danger. The first literary effort of his mind was an exposure of the absurdity of democratical innovations. This was the *Ticinus* of our political Scipio.

It has been often said that he was bred a Catholic, and studied at St. Omers. To his supposed education many of his political measures have been ascribed: particularly to his popish institution were imputed his opposition to the Protestant associations in 1780, and his endeavour to effect Catholic emancipation in Ireland. But the fact now ascertained and admitted is, that he never studied at St. Omers, nor at any popish or even

foreign seminary.\* He was bred a Protestant, and always continued a member of the Episcopal church, although he entertained a very high opinion of the Dissenters;† and a particular esteem for the Catholics.

Among the various literary studies to which his genius was directed, pneumatology, as we have said, was one. Philosophers, indeed, have generally considered man in his individual powers, before they have followed these powers through their

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\* Mr. Murphy, who was about the same age with Mr. Burke, was from 1745 to 1750 at St. Omers, and knew many gentlemen who had been there for five years immediately before himself, and others who remained after him, until Burke entered himself of the Temple in London. The joint testimony of these witnesses proves that he *was not* a student at St. Omers. The evidence of his school-fellows and fellow-students in Ireland proves, that *he could not be* at St. Omers, because he was at Ballytore school and Dublin university until his education was finished.

† As long as they contented themselves with the liberty they enjoyed under the mild toleration of our laws and government, without making any attempts to subvert our established constitution. His disapprobation afterwards did not extend to all indiscriminately, it was directed to those individuals or classes only whose declarations or conduct manifested hostility to our church and state.

operation in the various relations and engagements of social life. They have analyzed the mind before they ascertained what affections or actions of it were useful or hurtful. Anatomy preceded preventives, regimen, and medicine. This has been the case both with philosophy and philosophers. Pneumatics have been studied before ethics: Xenophanes went before Socrates; Hutchinson's Analysis of the Passions was written before his Moral Philosophy. The study, indeed, of man's nature in the abstract, which requires only an examination of the individual, is, perhaps, more within the reach of a young man, than the study of it in its operations, amidst the complicated engagements and duties of society, which demands his attention to the species as well as individual.

Burke, in his youth, bestowed much attention on logic and metaphysics in general, and applied himself with particular diligence to the investigation of Berkley's and Hume's systems.

While employed in treasuring up a profound knowledge to render himself useful, he did not neglect the means of rendering himself agreeable in the intercourse of life. To the learning of a scholar he added the manners of a gentleman. His company was sought among the gay and fashionable, for his pleasing conversation and deportment, as much as among the learned, for the force and brilliancy of his genius, the extent and depth of his knowledge. He had that great art of good breeding which rendered the members of the company pleased with him and themselves. He had an inexhaustible fund of discourse, either serious or merry, with wit and humour, poignant, strong, delicate, sportive, as answered the purpose of occasion. He had a vast variety of anecdotes and stories, which were always well adapted and well told ; a constant cheerfulness and high spirits. His looks and voice were in unison with the agreeableness, insinuation, and impressiveness of his conversation and manners.

But though the object of regard and admiration in his native country, he did not see much chance of acquiring in it an independent situation. Ireland, though often the mother of genius, is rarely its nurse. Burke, seeing little prospect of soon raising himself in his own country, made his first essay to attain permanent employment in another. Soon after he had finished academical studies, a vacancy took place in the professorship of Logic at Glasgow. A considerable intercourse had long subsisted between the universities of Glasgow and Dublin, owing, probably, in some measure to their local position, but in a great degree to the fame of the eminent Hutchinson, who had been educated at Dublin, and always retained a close intercourse with Ireland.

Burke, conscious of his metaphysical knowledge, applied for the professorship; but too late. Had he been successful, the Logic chair of Glasgow might, if possible, have been still more eminent than the Moral Philosophy chairs of Glasgow and of Edin-

burgh: though the former have been filled by a Hutchinson, Smith, and Reid; the latter has been occupied by a Fergusson, and is now by a Stewart. Burke had planned a confutation of the Berkleian and Humean hypothesis; but the active engagements of politics afterwards prevented the completion of his speculative disquisitions.

Disappointment of early views has been the means of advancement to several eminent men of modern times. Dr. Fergusson was disappointed in an application for an inconsiderable living in an obscure part of Scotland. Had he been successful, taken up with the duties of his profession, his literary and philosophical talents might have been lost to the world.

Had Dr. Johnson become master of the Staffordshire school, talents might have been consumed in the tuition of boys which Providence formed for the instruction of men. The chair which Burke desired to fill would have been favourable to philosophical effort.



Whether, on the whole, his mind might not have been employed as usefully for himself and for mankind, in the sequestered pursuits of literature, is a premature inquiry at this stage of his life; for, if a solvable question, the solution must depend on the effects arising from a different direction of his powers during more advanced periods.

We now know, that the time devoted by Bacon to philosophy was of infinitely superior utility to mankind to that which was occupied in public life. We know, that his political counsels were of much less efficacy, in the wise and successful reign of great Elizabeth, than those of men, who, though possessing considerable talents, were (as almost all men were that ever the world saw) very much inferior in genius to Sir Francis Bacon. As a judge, even had he in a moral view been blameless, he could have done no more than a person of merely a sound understanding, common learning, and professional knowledge, without either genius or philosophy. In the early part of Bacon's

life it would have been premature to have determined whether, in a private or public capacity, he might have been most beneficial to himself and to society.

Disappointed in Glasgow, Burke betook himself to London, where genius, if vigorously and assiduously exerted, and judiciously directed, seldom fails of ultimate success.

His first arrival in the metropolis was in 1753, and he immediately entered himself of the Temple. Mr. Murphy, who became a law-student nearly about the same time, was so kind as to communicate to me the particulars of his first interview with Mr. Burke, and the first impression which he made on his mind.

Mr. Kelly, a friend of Mr. Murphy, said to him, ‘ Murphy, you do not know our countryman, Burke?’ Mr. Murphy expressing a desire to be acquainted with a gentleman of whom Mr. Kelly spoke very

highly, Mr. Kelly made a party soon after at his chambers, and introduced the young gentlemen to each other. Mr. Murphy was filled with astonishment, not only at the brilliancy and force of his new acquaintance's genius, but the extent and variety of his literary attainments, though not twenty-four years of age.

An intimacy commenced, which gave Mr. Murphy an opportunity of thoroughly knowing, not only the powers and acquirements, but the juvenile habits of Edmund. These, fortunately for mankind, were such as to permit the most constant and complete cultivation of his extraordinary talents, at an age when the great powers of many have been perverted by profligacy. Edmund, even in the heyday of youth, was eminent for *temperance*. He was addicted to no species of vicious indulgence. Neither the frivolity of fashionable dissipation, the wickedness of debauchery, nor the madness of gaming, wasted, corrupted, or disturbed his mind.

Various accounts are given of his finances at the outset of life. It has of late been asserted that he began the world with a handsome competency, which he sunk by an adherence to a party. The term *handsome competency* being vague and indefinite, I cannot enter into a particular discussion of it; but it appears probable that it was not very considerable when he came to London. This is a natural inference from the mode which he adopted soon after his arrival. When he had entered himself of the Temple, he submitted to the drudgery of regularly writing for daily, weekly, and monthly publications. It is not probable that a man, possessed of a competent subsistence in his own private fortune, would seek to earn money by hired writing for newspapers and magazines. But were we to admit that his circumstances were good, we should by no means, by the admission, exalt his merit: the more difficulties he had to combat, the greater force of mind was required to surmount them. To have begun the world in independent

circumstances would not have added to his character.

In the *Preface to his Posthumous Works* it is stated by the learned Editor, that the family from which Burke was sprung had been ennobled in several of its branches. A reader of the History of Ireland will find that Bourke\* was, in the last century, the family name of several peers of that kingdom. Of these, the most distinguished were the Marquis of Clanricarde and Viscount Clanmorris, extinct; and Lord Brittas, forfeited. It is probable that these noble families were branches of that of Bourke—Lord Bourke. The only titled Bourke of the present age is the Earl of Mayo. Burke is believed to have descended from the same root. I do not mention these circumstances with a view to emblazon native genius by heraldry. Edmund Burke must have conferred much more lustre

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\* The name of Burke, or Bourke, was held in high esteem by the ancient Irish.

upon any family than he could have derived from it. But as readers are generally curious to know something of the descent of a subject of biography, I think it my duty to state facts where they can be known ; and, where they cannot, the most probable and generally received opinions. I am assured by Dr. Lawrence, that Burke's grandfather possessed an estate of three thousand a-year, near Limerick, which was confiscated. This event may have been the means of stimulating the talents of his son, and perhaps the genius of his grandson.

To periodical publications he contributed essays on various subjects of general literature and particular politics. These essays, though uniting information, reasoning, invention, and composition, much beyond contemporary writers, did not immediately enable their author to emerge from obscurity. Patronage does not always follow literary merit : if it do, it comes rarely when most wanted—before fame has secured success. Those who are most willing to be the pa-

trons of learning are not always the most capable of appreciating merit, and are often misled by dependents, whose own place in their esteem would suffer by a just appreciation. Besides, the love of obsequiousness and flattery is very frequently the motive to patronage. Adulation and servility inferior retainers to letters will readily pay ; while to such arts conscious intellect will not stoop. Such, therefore, often fail of the protection of the great. A Cibber will be admitted by a patron who excludes a Johnson.

The profits of Burke's writings were at first small. The earliest offerings of literature must be to fame ; from fame follows emolument.

He frequently passed his leisure hours in the company of Mrs. Woffington. This several of his detractors have endeavoured to make a subject of ridicule. But it is certain that this lady's conversation was no less anxiously courted by men of wit and genius, than by men of pleasure. It is equally cer-

tain that he was, on the whole, a man of great temperance. Whether he was so completely chaste as to resist the attractions of that engaging woman, I cannot affirm. If, instead of standing candidate for being professor of Logic at Glasgow, he had applied for orders in the kirk, and Mrs. Woffington had been within its jurisdiction, an inquiry would probably have been instituted; but as that was not the case, I have no means of satisfying the curious in that branch of biography. Whatever may have been his occasional avocations, he in the Temple applied himself with the most vigorous industry to writing essays and increasing his knowledge. Applying to learning and science in general, the studies to which he gave himself up with the most peculiar zeal were those which unfolded human nature,—history, ethics, politics, pneumatology, poetry, and criticism. His health was gradually impaired by this intense application, and an alarming illness ensued. He resorted for medical advice to Dr. Nugent, a physician



of great talents and skill, and of no less benevolence. The Doctor, considering that the noise, and various disturbances incidental to chambers, must impede the recovery of his patient, kindly offered him apartments in his own house. Attention and tender treatment, not from the Doctor only, but all the family, had soon a more powerful effect than any medicine in producing the restoration of his health. Among the most attentive to her father's patient and guest was Miss Nugent, whose general amiableness and particular tenderness to himself soon excited a passion in the sensible heart of Burke. He offered her his hand, which she accepted ; and, during a long life of various vicissitudes and trying situations, had, in her soothing and affectionate conduct, every reason to rejoice at his lot.

Hitherto his mental powers and acquisitions were but partially known. The exertion of his literary talents had been confined to detached essays. His first acknow-

ledged production is his *Vindication of Natural Society*.

This performance is an important object to his biographers, as it marks the sound principles of religion, philosophy, and politics, which he had early formed. By an ironical vindication of natural society, in preference to artificial or political, he exposes the false philosophy of Bolingbroke, which, he thinks, had a tendency to overturn virtue, and every established mode of religion and of government. The scepticism of that author had hitherto infected only men of rank or literature. It was reserved for Paine to simplify infidelity to the capacities of unlettered men. The disciples of Bolingbroke considered his notions as applying to theology only ; they did not foresee that the same engines that were employed for the destruction of religion, which they did not regard, might be used for the subversion of government, the annihilation of their privileges, and the forfeiture of their property, which they did regard.

The tendency of religious scepticism to produce political confusion was discovered by the penetrating genius of a Burke. He endeavoured to turn sceptics to sound thinking, by shewing that, if false philosophy became general, it would ultimately destroy their rank, consequence, and property. In his ironical attack upon artificial society, *he purposely employs the common-place mode of unfair reasoning. He argues from incidental abuses against the several forms of political society.\** Though he intentionally draws a wrong

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\* Godwin, in one of the first chapters of his '*Political Justice*,' in exhibiting what he calls *the history of political society*, does little more than *copy the ironical arguments of Burke* as serious; and endeavours to prove that those objections, which the powerful irony of Burke demonstrates to be trivial, are unanswerable. In speaking of the frequency of war, and enumerating the instances in ancient and modern times, he nearly repeats the very words of Burke.

War, bloodshed, and desolation; despotism, and most of the evils incident to man, Godwin *seriously* imputes to political society; and they might, he affirms, have been avoided, had men never formed political societies, but existed in what he calls *a state of nature*; a state never realized in the history of man, and concerning which, consequently, we cannot reason, having neither facts nor principles.

conclusion from his statement of existing abuses, the statement itself is very eloquent, and not much overcharged. Pretending to prove that, because wars often take place between political societies, political society itself is bad, he draws a very striking and glowing picture of the horrors of war, and enters into a particular detail of the butcheries arising from the enmities of men. He gives a summary of the effects of the proceedings of Sesostris, Semiramis, and other conquerors, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman ; the northern swarm, the Saracens, Tartars, and those of more modern times, in the bloodshed and devastation that they have caused. " From (says he) the earliest dawnings of policy to this day, the invention of men has been sharpening and improving the mystery of murder, from the rude essays of clubs and stones, to the present perfection of gunnery, cannoneering, bombarding, mining, and all other species of artificial, learned, and refined cruelty, in which we are now so expert, and which

make a principal part of what politicians have taught us to believe is our principal glory." He ironically imputes the evils he has detailed to political society, alleging that, if men were not so associated, it would have been impossible to find numbers sufficient for such slaughters agreed in the same bloody purpose. "How far then nature would have carried us, we may judge by the examples of those animals who still follow her laws, and even of those to whom she has given dispositions more fierce, and arms more terrible, than ever she intended we should use. It is an incontestible truth, that there is more havock made in one year, by men, of men, than has been made by all the lions, tygers, panthers, ounces, leopards, hyenas, rhinoceroses, elephants, bears, and wolves, upon their several species since the beginning of the world, though these agree ill enough with each other."

He goes over the various forms of political society, mentioning their defects; in perfect

imitation of sceptical philosophy, pulling them down, and building no other systems in their place. So complete is the irony, that to many, not acquainted with such disquisitions, he would appear to be seriously inveighing against established government. Some modern democrats might suppose that he was supporting the doctrines of one of their apostles. The following passage, among many others, very happily imitates the declamation of anarchists. “ But with respect to you, ye legislators, ye civilizers of mankind, ye Orpheuses, Moseses, Minoses, Solons, Theseuses, Lycurguses, Numas!—with respect to you, be it spoken, your regulations have done more mischief in cold blood, than all the rage of the fiercest animals, in their greatest terrors or furies, has ever done, or ever could do.” These opinions so much resemble those of disorganizing speculators, that many parts of the *Vindication of Natural Society against Artificial Societies*, if taken seriously, as some readers might take it, would appear intended to prove *speculatively* what the *Vindication of the Rights of*

*Nature, in opposition to the Usurpation of Establishment,\** RECOMMENDS TO PRACTICE.

The Vindication of Natural Society displays at once the extent of the author's knowledge, in the historical statements; the versatility of his genius, in the happy imitation of Bolingbroke; and the force of his sagacity, in perceiving, though hitherto unguided by experience, the tendency of scepticism to dissolve the bands of society. This essay is evidently the production of a mind of no ordinary portion of talents, but of talents not yet quite arrived at their zenith.

His first acknowledged literary work did not meet with so great success as its ingenuity deserved. Like the paradoxes of the Vicar of Wakefield's son, it neither excited much praise nor blame: like Hume's first ef-

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\* The reader may, perhaps, not remember this treatise. It was one of the ranting, ignorant, impudent effusions of Thelwall, in which he states that "Socrates was a democratic lecturer, and Edmund Burke a scribler."

fort, it fell *dead-born* from the press, but was afterwards revived by its younger brothers.

Burke was still a student in the Temple ; but although no man could be more completely master of law, either in its details or general principles, as a subject of moral and political history and science, yet he does not appear to have studied it with very great zeal as a profession. Hume informs us, in *his own Life*, that, though professing to study law, he found an insurmountable aversion to every thing but the pursuits of general learning. ‘ While they (his friends) fancied I was poring over Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors I was secretly devouring.’ In the like manner, works of taste, genius, and philosophy, attracted Burke more powerfully than usage, decision, and statute. Homer and Longinus occupied his mind more than Fortescue and Littleton.

Soon after his *Vindication of Natural Society*, he published *an Essay on the Sublime*



*and Beautiful*,\* a work which shewed a genius much beyond that of common critics, and even of highly-approved critics. In considering this essay, we are not to look for a *rhétorician enumerating constituents* of fine writing, but for a PHILOSOPHER TRACING PHÆNOMENA AND THEIR CAUSES in physical and moral nature. He not only collects and narrates facts, but investigates principles; he is not merely an experimental, he is a scientific critic. Longinus possessed more the genius of a poet than the investigating coolness of a philosopher. He illustrates and exemplifies sublimity rather than unfolds its causes. In treating of the Sublime, Longinus includes the pathetic, and even the beautiful. His treatise affords less distinct instruction concerning the sublime in particular, than ideas concerning excellent composition in general.

Sublimity and beauty had, either through inadvertency or ignorance, been frequently

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\* In 1757.

confounded, and mistaken one for the other. This, as the author remarks, must necessarily cause many mistakes in those whose business it is to influence the passions ; since, by being unacquainted with the difference between the sublime and the beautiful, they cannot happily succeed, unless by chance, in either. The design of this work, then, is to lay down such principles as may tend to ascertain and distinguish the sublime and the beautiful in any art, and to form a sort of standard for each.

The author first inquires into the affections of the sublime and beautiful, in their own nature : he then proceeds to investigate the properties of such things in nature as give rise to the affections ; and, lastly, he considers in what manner these properties act, to produce those affections, and each correspondent emotion.

It will be generally allowed by readers conversant in such subjects, that the author

displays a mind, both 'feelingly alive to each fine impulse,' and able to investigate its own operations, their effects and causes. It unites Longinus and Aristotle. Burke is a philosophical anatomist of the human mind. In respect of taste and its objects, he is what Hutchinson is in respect to the affections, and Locke to the understanding; the first who, by experiment and analysis, investigated an important subject in pneumatology. Like those two profound philosophers, his account of phænomena is just and accurate, though some of his theories may be incomplete and fanciful.

Whoever turns his attention to subjects of taste, must see that Burke's enumeration of the qualities which constitute sublimity and beauty is exact. Whoever is acquainted with literary history, must know that an analytical inquiry and scientific discussion of these subjects is *new*. Mr. Addison, indeed, in his *Spectators* on the Pleasures of the Imagination, describes grandeur and beauty in

general; but does not analyze either, so as to give a clear view of constituents, much less to ascertain principles.

Many readers, who will admit the justness of Burke's account of qualities, may esteem some of his hypotheses incomplete. 'Whatever (says he) is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime.' That terror is a principal source, he very clearly demonstrates, and ingeniously illustrates; but in esteeming terrible objects, and those of analogous operation, the sole constituents of sublimity, he appears, like many men of genius, to be led too far by the love of system.

Like Pythagoras, he, in some cases, errs from the tendency of a great mind to generalization. There are many objects sublime which are not terrible. Magnificence, vastness, force, constituents of sublimity, and

included in his enumeration, excite either astonishment or admiration, sentiments not analagous to terror. A mountain, a lofty and spacious building, are sublime without being terrible.

When he comes to speak of beauty, he propounds a theory, of which the following is the substance. Beauty is that quality, or those qualities, of bodies by which they cause love, or some passion similar to it. This idea cannot arise from proportion, since, in vegetables and animals, there is no standard by which we can measure our ideas of proportion; and in man, exact proportion is not always the criterion of beauty; neither can it arise from fitness, since, then, all animals would have beauty; for every one seems best adapted to its own way of living; and in man, strength would have the name of beauty, which, however, presents a very different idea. Nor is it the result of perfection; for we are often charmed with the imperfections of an agreeable object. Nor, lastly, of the qualities and virtues of the

mind ; since such rather conciliate our esteem than our love. Beauty, therefore, is no creature of reason, but some merely sensible quality acting mechanically upon the mind, by the intervention of the senses.— First, the qualities of beauty, as they are merely sensible qualities, are comparative smallness. Secondly, they must be smooth. Thirdly, they must have a variety in the direction of their parts. Fourthly, they must have those parts not angular, but melted, as it were, into each other. Fifthly, they must be of a delicate frame, without any remarkable appearance of strength. Sixthly, they must have their colours clear and bright, but not very strong and glaring. Seventhly, or if they should have any glaring colour, they must have it diversified with others.

Under the head of beauty he considers those qualities of sound of which the operation is analogous to that of beautiful objects of sight. In sounds, the most beautiful are the soft and delicate ; not that strength of note required to raise other passions, nor

notes which are shrill, or harsh, or deep. It agrees best with such as are clear, even, smooth, and weak. Thus there is a remarkable contrast between the beautiful and the sublime: sublime objects are vast in their dimensions; beautiful ones comparatively small. Beauty should be smooth and polished; the great, rugged and negligent. Beauty should not be obscure; the great ought to be dark and gloomy. Beauty should be light and delicate; the great ought to be solid, and even massive. A great part of this enumeration is, no doubt, just. Most writers have resolved beauty into colour, figure, motion, and adaptation to an end; and in the beauty of sentient and rational creatures have included the expression of countenance. Mr. Hume considers the other constituents as subservient to utility, and makes fitness the criterion of beauty. In this Mr. Hume probably errs, as many things are useful which are not beautiful, and many are beautiful which are not useful. But if Mr. Hume lays too great a stress on utility as a constituent of beauty, Mr. Burke appears to lay too little. Beauty and utility

are certainly not, as Mr. Hume alledges, identical ; but they co-exist much more constantly than Mr. Burke's hypothesis \* seems to allow.

But though somewhat fanciful in parts of his theory, Burke is a perspicuous observer, and a philosophical investigator. In his detail of constituents, he is accurate and comprehensive ; in his assignation of efficient causes, often just, sometimes imaginative, always acute and ingenious ; in his reasoning on final causes, profound, wise, and pious.

We may consider the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful in two lights,—as an addition to literature and an exhibition of genius. It affords the greatest accession to the knowledge of a most important branch of pneumatology, and its appropriate objects, of any work which has yet appeared. Succeeding writers, who have rejected the

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\* The system of our author, in several respects, concurs with that of Hutchinson, who placed beauty in *uniformity*, mingled with *variety*, altho' he dwells more on the latter than the former. It coincides with Hogarth's analysis of beauty.



theory, have done little more than copy the account of the phænomena, especially on the sublime. It displays the learning of a scholar, the invention of a poet, and the wisdom of a philosopher. Johnson considered this work as a model of philosophical criticism. 'We have (he said) an example of true criticism in Burke's Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful. There is no great merit in shewing how many plays have ghosts in them, or how this ghost is better than that, you must shew how terror is impressed on the human heart.'

Burke, from this work, soon became universally known and admired. The ignorant and superficial, from the subject, believed him to be a man of taste; the learned and the wise, from the execution, knew him to be a man of taste and profound philosophy.

On perusing Burke's book, his father was so enraptured as to send him a remittance of one hundred pounds; from him a considerable sum, as he had not then got the es-

tate, which afterwards descended to Edmund from an elder brother, and was far from being opulent. By this remittance, and the sale of his book, he was relieved from some pecuniary embarrassments, which pressed him at the time.

He began now to be known as a man of great genius and erudition. The publication of the *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* is a GRAND EPOCH in the literary history of Burke, as from it we may date the *commencement* of his eminence as a writer. This treatise was, therefore, not only an important accession to philosophy, an exertion of extraordinary genius, but a ground-work of extraordinary fame.

In consequence of the manifestation of his intellectual powers, men of distinguished talents courted his acquaintance.

In reviewing the life of any man, it is often necessary to attend to those with whom he had most frequent intercourse, whether

private, literary, or political. Respecting the literary friends of Burke, the public is indebted for much valuable information to Mr. Boswell's *Life of Johnson*; a book which, though it contains materials that might have been as well, for the reputation of the author and of his subject, omitted, certainly is replete with useful and entertaining facts and observations.\* The history of Boswell himself, and of the family of Auchinleck, does not diminish the value of the many faithful transcripts of the mind and conversation of Johnson and his companions, of whom Burke was, beyond all others, the most highly admired. At this time his fellow-student, Mr. Goldsmith, was in London, and was commencing his literary career. Goldsmith from Dublin had gone to Edinburgh, and studied physic. Afterwards he set out for the continent, and pursued his travels on foot, somewhat in the manner of George,

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\* What an addition it would have been to the materials of biography, if any person of equal minuteness and accuracy of observation, vigilance of attention, powers of recollection and communication, had employed his talents on the private life and conversation of Edmund Burke!

in his novel of the Vicar of Wakefield, partly by demanding at universities to enter the lists as disputant, by which, according to the custom of many, if he acquitted himself well, he was entitled to a dinner, a bed, and a crown in money. He returned to England, and was employed successively as an usher to an academy, a corrector to the press, a reviewer, and a writer for newspapers. He assiduously cultivated the acquaintance of Johnson, and his faculties were gradually enlarged by the contemplation of that great man. ‘His mind (says Boswell, probably expressing from recollection the opinion of Johnson) resembled a fertile but thin soil: there was a quick, but not a strong, vegetation of whatever chanced to be sown. No deep root could be struck. The oak of the forest did not grow there, but the elegant shrubbery and the fragrant parterre.’

In Johnson’s commendation of Goldsmith, prefatory to the Life of Parnell, there is nothing inconsistent with this opinion. He

praises him, for doing well whatever he attempted, which does not imply that he either attempted or performed any very great or difficult work.

Mr. (Sir Joshua) Reynolds and the Colossus of English literature sought the acquaintance of the Author of the Sublime. Intimate friendship soon succeeded his acquaintance with both. Mr. Reynolds's house was the favourite resort of men of talents. Among the ingenious and wise of his own countrymen, Johnson stood 'like Saul among the people.' Indeed, among many eminent for literary talents, the three kingdoms afforded each a man exalted above the rest:—Johnson, Hume, and Burke. Johnson, from the commencement of their acquaintance, discovered in Burke that extraordinary genius and knowledge which the world afterwards saw. He declared he was the greatest man living, and that if you were to be driven to seek shelter from a shower of rain under the same gateway with him, you must in a few minutes perceive his superiority over

common men. This observation shewed not only Johnson's exalted idea of Burke's treasures, but also of his powers of communication. He saw there was in him not only a surprising general facility of communicating and applying his intellectual stores, but a wonderful versatility in adapting his explanations and discourses to the subject, and to the capacity of the hearers. ' If (said he) Burke were to go into a stable, and talk for a short time with the ostlers, they would venerate him as the wisest man they had ever seen.' Indeed, in every company, of whatever rank or capacity, he poured out his mind; but it was not the display of pedantry, it was the effusion of fulness.

Mr. Murphy informed me, that Christmas Day, 1758, he dined in company with Dr. Johnson and Mr. Burke. He then, for the first time, observed that Dr. Johnson would from Edmund bear contradiction, which he would *tolerate* from no other person. The principal subject of conversation was Bengal; concerning which, though then just beginning to be particularly known by our coun-

trymen, Burke displayed most accurate and extensive information.

How greatly Johnson delighted in convivial meetings, and how he relished the attractions of a tavern, and enjoyed that unrestrained conversation which it admits much more than domestic parties, is well known. A weekly club was instituted for his gratification, and for the instruction and entertainment of its several members. The place of meeting was the Turk's Head,\* Gerrard-street, Soho; the time every Monday, at seven in the evening. The club, at its institution, consisted of the following members: Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith, Reynolds, Mr. Topham Beauclerc, Dr. Nugent, Sir John Hawkins, Mr. Chamier, Mr. Bennet Langton.

Mr. Beauclerc united to the character of a man of parts, information, and taste, that of the man of fashion. Having spent much time in Italy, he improved his natural taste

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\* Now a private house, N. side of the street, inhabited by Col. Robertson, of the Westminster Volunteers.

for the fine arts by the contemplation of the most exquisite models. With classical literature, history, and antiquities, he was beyond most men acquainted. His conversation was variegated—learned, witty, generally gay, sometimes serious, and always polite,—admirably adapted for diffusing pleasure over a company. He was a great collector of books, and at his death left a library which yielded upwards of five thousand pounds. Though dissipated, his many amiable and respectable qualifications rendered him a great favourite with Burke and Johnson. Nugent was a physician, well esteemed for professional talents, general information, and agreeable manners. He was father-in-law to Burke.

Hawkins\* is since known as the executor and biographer of Johnson, and the historian

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\* Sir John Hawkins appears to have *implicitly* adopted some of Johnson's opinions, especially those of a bigotted and illiberal cast. He was very austere and morose in his criticisms, though by no means acute or discriminating.



of music. Chamier, though bred a stock-broker, had received a liberal education, was a good scholar, and particularly well versed in modern languages. Mr. Langton, a gentleman of Lincolnshire, of parts and knowledge, and from congeniality of religious and political notions, a distinguished favourite with Johnson. Reynolds, long before that time eminent for his genius and skill. Goldsmith, rising to literary renown. Far above others stood Burke and Johnson.

From this account it is evident that every member of the club was qualified to contribute a considerable portion of pleasing and useful conversation. This society was, in the talents and learning of its members, not inferior to the famed Scriblerus-club of the preceding age. Two of the number stand higher than Pope or Swift. The greatest admirers of the wit, humour, and genius of those two extraordinary men will hardly consider them as equal to the capacity, fullness, powers, and exertion of Johnson; to the force, versatility, expansion, richness,

and invention of Burke. However much the world is indebted to the separate efforts of the members of this club, it does not appear that, like those of the Scriblerus, they employed their literary labours in any joint work. Indeed this is not difficult to account for: the leading men of the Scriblerus resembled one another in the *species* as well as *the degree* of their excellence; whereas Johnson and Burke were as different from each other in the *species* and direction of their talents, as they were superior to most men in the degrees of their mental powers. But though the members of the Turk's-head did not unite their talents in the production of any work, they derived very great advantages from mutual intercourse, communication of opinions, and the result of separate experience, closely examined and ably discussed. Though they did not join their talents in one work, they exerted themselves severally in the club, by speaking or writing on subjects of literature.

The members of the Turk's-head, like those of the Scriblerus club, very frequently unbent themselves by light amusements and frolics. A remark made on the latter may be equally applied to other literary societies. ' They (the Scriblerus-club) often experienced the truth of Horace's observation, *Dulce est desipere in loco*. The time for wits to play the fool is when they meet together to relax from the severity of mental exertions. Their follies have frequently a degree of extravagance much beyond the phlegmatic merriment of sober dulness, and can be relished by those only who, having wit themselves, can trace the extravagance to the real source, and make a candid allowance for an effect arising from so noble a cause.\*

The Turk's-head indulged themselves in agreeable trifling as well as important discussion. Goldsmith contributed no less to the

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\* See *Lives of the Authors of the Spectator*, published by G. Cawthorn, No. 132, Strand.

amusement of the club by his foibles and absurdities than to their entertainment by his abilities. Perhaps, indeed, there never was a man, the various traits of whose character were more inconsistent than those of Goldsmith,—never a more motely mixture of strength and weakness, clearness and confusion, knowledge and ignorance. Though capable of exhibiting human character naturally and humorously, either in a single essay or through a volume, he could not tell a story without murdering it. Although in continuous writings his views were clear, just, and comprehensive; in occasional conversation he was perpetually falling into gross blunders. In his literary efforts, he pourtrayed nature, without deviating from truth: embellishing whatever he represented,\* he produced whatever effect he desired. In company he always said or did something different from what he intended.

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\* Nihil tetigit quod non ornavit.

*Epitaph, Westminster Abbey.*

The opponents of a nobleman of considerable talents affixed to him the name of Malagrida. This nobleman, it is well known, has been accused of insincerity and duplicity. Goldsmith being in company with him, and probably meaning to say to him that he wondered how people could apply to his Lordship the name of a man of fair character as a term of reproach, said, ‘ I am surprized how they can call your Lordship Malagrida; Malagrida was an honest man.’

Goldsmith valued himself very much on his *bon mots*; and, were we to judge from his publications, we might conceive not without reason, but in conversation the point was lost. As he was extremely vain in general, he was peculiarly so in what concerned his colloquial powers, not only trying new jests, but repeating those he made in other companies; and was much mortified if they did not produce the intended laugh. Hawkins, in his Life of Johnson, tell us that a common preface of Goldsmith to a story was, ‘ I’ll tell you a story of myself, which some

people laugh at and some do not.' One evening, as the company was breaking up, he told them if they would call for another bottle they should hear one of his bon mots. They agreed, and he began thus: 'I was once told that Sheridan the player, in order to improve himself in stage gesture, had looking-glasses, to the number of ten, hung about his room, and that he practised before them; upon which I said,—then there were ten ugly fellows together.' The company not discovering much humour in this story, and perhaps wishing to mortify his anxious solicitude for praise, did not laugh. He went away in a great passion, without tasting the wine.

The members often amused themselves in making puns. Goldsmith was eager to try any means to attain praise; and not only tried his invention, but endeavoured to retail the puns he heard in other companies as his own. He had heard the pun about sending stale pease to Hammersmith, as that was the way to (turn'em green) Turnham-

Green. Believing that pun new, he resolved to use it as his own, and at supper, pretending to think the pease too old, called to the waiter to send the pease to Hammersmith. 'To Hammersmith, Sir?' 'Yes, (says Goldsmith) that's the way to *make* them green.' He was very angry that the company found no jest, blundering out, 'it was a very good joke when I heard it last night.' He affected the manner of Johnson; and the club, to vex him, called him Dr. Minor, giving to Johnson, as all must acknowledge he deserved among any Doctors, the appellation of Dr. Major. He was greatly affronted with the application of the title of Dr. Minor to him. Johnson had a custom of contracting the names of his friends, as Mund for Edmund. Goldsmith was much displeased with the contraction of Goldy as a diminution of his importance, and said, 'I wish, Sir, you would not call me Goldy, but Doctor Goldsmith.' His vanity extended even to his dress. He was as anxious to be thought well attired as an ignorant beau, or a boarding-school girl, but had no

earthly taste in the choice of habiliments. He one day came to the club in a very glaring bloom-coloured coat, and strutted about, looking at his clothes, and seemingly wishing them to attract the attention of the company. Some of them ridiculed his dress. He, to prove how wrong they were, said, 'let me tell you, gentlemen, when my taylor brought home this coat, he begged of me to tell all my friends who made it.' 'Why (said Johnson) that was because he knew the strange colour would attract crouds to gaze at it, and thus they might hear of him, and see how well he could make a coat even of so absurd a colour.'

By such frivolities did the author of *the Deserted Village*, of *the Vicar of Wakefield*, and *the Travellers* often expose himself to men greatly his inferiors in intellectual powers.

In the club, Burke frequently amused himself with punning; but his efforts generally produced some resemblance of thought, imagery, or sentiment, not merely a play



of words. One recorded by Boswell was on the mob chairing Wilkes. This being mentioned at the club, Burke made a small change in the words in which Horace describes Pindar's numbers:—*Fertur numeris lege solutis*. He (Pindar) is carried (by the force and rapidity of his genius) in numbers uncontrouled by law, (the rules of versification). Burke, instead of *numeris* made *bumeris*. He (Wilkes) is carried on shoulders uncontrouled by law. Even here, besides the play of words, we see that he, though a friend to liberty, *satirizes the licentiousness of a mob*. \* Burke, from the exuberance of his mind, took a considerable share in the conversation ; but was always unassuming and polite, listening with attention to the observations of others, and endeavouring to descend to an equality with every member. His manners and colloquial talents rendered him the delight and admiration of the company, but most of all of Johnson, who was the most

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\* One of the reviewers censures this interpretation of the pun ; probably thinking it treason against the *Majesty of the People*.

capable of appreciating his excellence. He remarked, that whenever he was in company with Burke he went away more knowing and wiser than he came, and that every time they conversed, his mind was kept on the full stretch. The members of the club, and other friends of both, observed that Johnson never discoursed with greater animation and energy than when his powers were excited by Burke.

Soon after the institution of the club, Mr. Garrick, who had been on his travels, returned to England, and being well acquainted with most of the members, gave some intimation that he would be one of their number, supposing that the least hint of such a desire would be eagerly embraced. Johnson, who, though he loved Garrick, undervalued his profession, was offended at what he esteemed the presumption of an *offer* where he ought to have made a *request*. 'He will be one of us!—how does he know we will let him?' Burke, who equally regarded Garrick, and thought much more

highly of theatrical talents, wished he might be introduced ; but Johnson exclaimed, ‘ He will disturb us with his buffconery.’ Neither Burke nor others, who were disposed to admit him, insisted on his admission ; so that he did not become a member immediately, but was afterwards received into the club. Sir John Hawkins, therefore, is inaccurate in his assertion, that Garrick was never elected. It is a matter of notoriety that he was chosen a member, and that he continued so to his death. Sir John states himself to have left it, because the hours were later than agreeable to him, and convenient to his family. Most men endued with taste, and who could comprehend intellectual excellence, would have, for such company, continued an hour or two longer, even though not altogether conformable to their usual practice, and the regulations of their family. *To men of talents* such company as Johnson and Burke would be a much higher treat than an opera or a ball to the frivolous votaries of fashionable amusements. According to Boswell, who very faithfully recorded what-

ever related to the club, Sir John one evening attacked Burke so rudely, that all the company testified their displeasure.\* At their next meeting they received Hawkins so coolly as to prevent his future visits.

Burke made considerable progress in a confutation of the visionary theories of Berkley and Hume concerning the existence of matter. Had not other objects withdrawn his attention from metaphysical discussions, it is probable he might have controverted more of Hume's positions, and followed him to ethics and religion. He was a rational Christian; and no man better understood the foundation of his faith, or could more ably defend it against attacks. His pen, if employed on the subject, must have produced an answer which even Hume could not have had the hardihood to disregard. But it be-

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\* One subject of dispute was the merit of Fielding's Novels, which Hawkins attacked and Burke defended. What Hawkins wanted in argument he endeavoured to supply by abuse, of which he poured out a great quantity.

longs not to the biographer to launch into the regions of possibility, his province is to narrate facts. Politics soon occupied Burke's attention, so much as to leave little time for publications with which they had no immediate connection.

While studying the philosophy of Hume, he was not inattentive to a subject which occupied that illustrious man, to the much greater benefit of mankind. He became more intimately conversant with history in general, and the history of these realms in particular ; carrying his attention to more recent periods than those which our philosophical historian has described. He made himself master of our history, external and internal, from the revolution, in all its branches ; its great and increasing complications and varieties. In 1758, he proposed to Mr. Dodsley a plan of an ANNUAL REGISTER of the civil, political, and literary transactions of the times. Mr. Dodsley acceded, and the work was carried on for several years, either by Burke, or under his

immediate inspection. Afterwards, when he was immersed in active politics, it was conducted under his general superintendence, with only occasional exertions of his own talents. To ascertain what parts of the Annual Register were executed by Burke himself requires no very great degree of penetration in a reader. Although several writers for this publication were men of learning, it is easy to distinguish between the effects of mere lettered industry and of extraordinary powers.

He had, at an early period of his life, become connected in intimate friendship with Mr. Hamilton, known by the name of *Single-speech Hamilton*, from an uncommonly excellent speech which he *once* delivered in the House of Commons. As he never distinguished himself by any other display of eloquence in the *British senate*, his friend, Mr. Burke, has been supposed the author of that oration. What has served to confirm the public in this opinion is, that afterwards, when Mr. Hamilton went over as Secretary

to Lord Halifax, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, he prevailed on this Mentor to accompany him, and procured for him a pension on the Irish establishment of three hundred pounds a year. Mr. Hamilton distinguished himself by a *second speech* in the Irish parliament, on a motion of Administration for suffering popish regiments to be raised in Ireland, for assisting Portugal against Spain. Burke was also supposed to be the composer of this speech. From being believed to have written in favour of employing papists as soldiers, a fiction arose that he was a papist himself. To give consistency to this fiction, it was reported that he had received his education and principles at St. Omers.

Those who were best acquainted with Hamilton and Burke do not think that the latter composed any of the speeches spoken by the former. The talents of Hamilton and his literary attainments were very great, and fully adequate to the production of the speeches which he spoke. An ample fortune, however, precluding the necessity of forming

habits of industry, and affording the means of pleasurable indulgence, to which he was prone, encouraged an indolence which kept his great talents from being vigorously exercised. At no period of his life was Burke addicted to dissipation. Of gaming he is said to have been so completely ignorant, that we are informed by an eminent countryman of his, that he hardly knew a single game at cards. To such a mind the resources were so abundant as to render unnecessary the aid of pictured pasteboard.

The time was now approaching, when his talents were to be displayed on the great political theatre. He returned to England. His pension exempted him from the constant necessity of frittering his genius in ephemeral productions. He employed himself in collecting treasures of wisdom, especially moral and political knowledge and philosophy, attending at once to detail and generalization, fact and principle, usage and law. He still *occasionally* wrote political essays in periodical publications. The Public Advertiser was



then the paper to which men of literature and genius most frequently contributed their efforts. Burke's writings in that journal attracted the notice of that worthy nobleman, the Marquis of Rockingham, who remarked their uncommon ability, and soon sought the acquaintance of the author. He was introduced to the Marquis by Mr. Fitzherbert, father of Lord St. Helens. This may be considered as a *grand epoch* in the life of Burke, as from it commenced his political career.

As he is soon to make his appearance in a different situation from what he has hitherto occupied, it may not be improper to take a view of his intellectual and moral character during a life solely literary, and which could not yet be called political. As a man of genius and learning he had established his reputation, and was ranked in a very high class. His Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful had displayed extraordinary powers, both of invention and research. His periodical performances marked at once accuracy

and multiplicity of knowledge, extent of views, and variety and appropriation of language. His conversation was equally instructive, pleasing, and entertaining. His moral character was as amiable and respectable as his intellectual was admirable. His integrity was unimpeached. Every action appeared to flow from benevolence. To render those with whom he consorted happy was the leading object of his conduct. His behaviour was delicate, insinuating, and engaging. The softness of his manners tempered the lustre of his genius. His temper was mild, sweetness and sensibility marked his countenance. There had not yet appeared that excessive irritability, that phrenzy of passion, which the contentions of the senate afterwards drew forth. The sparks were latent previous to the collision of party contest. The inflammable particles caught not fire antecedent to parliamentary concussion. In the thinner atmosphere of literary seclusion, those combustibles evaporated, which, in the denser medium of active politics, burst

out in lightning and thunderbolts. In his circumstances, he, though very far from being opulent, was, by his intellectual labours, dependent only on his genius. He surpassed most men not only in knowledge and powers, but in readiness of exertion and vigour of persevering industry. His talents, with his habits of exercise, and the terms he could command, from the estimation in which he was held, were sufficient to insure him an independent income. Such was his state in respect of talents, habits, temper, and the means of independence. Such was the stock he carried with him when he betook himself to politics. By the probable effects of his qualifications, if exclusively devoted to literary efforts, compared with their actual effects, principally devoted to public affairs, is his removal from the closet to the senate to be deemed fortunate or unfortunate to himself and to mankind.

To enable us to comprehend the conduct of a political actor, it is necessary to take a view of public affairs at the commencement

of his agency, and to remark their progress and variations during its continuance.

When Burke first entered on the business of the nation, clouds were gathering over the political atmosphere,—clouds which, if they did not portend a certain storm, rendered its approach probable. In the East, indeed, there was sun-shine; over-head the sky was overcasting; in the west it lowered; *res in oriente prosperæ, in occidente minaces*. Internally, discontents were prevalent; in the American colonies, disaffection was rapidly spreading.

Soon after the commencement of this reign, a spirit of opposition to Government was rising to disloyalty and turbulence. The resignation of a minister of uncommon talents, vigour, decision, and success, displeased the public. Deprived of his invigorating influence and wise direction, it was apprehended the counsels of Government would become imprudent and feeble. Although the career of success not only con-

tinued undiminished, but was increased, victory was imputed to the adoption of his plans by persons unable themselves to frame wise measures. With the fame and popularity of his predecessor, national prejudice concurred in rendering Lord Bute odious to the natives of England. Pitt was a minister of extraordinary abilities ; little merit would have been found in a successor even tho' an Englishman. The place of his nativity, independent of the virtues of his predecessor, would have been found sufficient to attach demerit to a Scotchman. The avowed reason for dislike to the Scotch Minister was, that the liberty of the country was in danger, from his principles and conduct.

The Earl of Bute was certainly not indebted to superiority of capacity for his exaltation. His talents, though not contemptible, were by no means great ; his attainments were such as moderate parts can easily reach. He was a good classical scholar ; he was tolerably well versed in those experimental details in natural history, physics,

chemistry, botany, and astronomy, which frivolous minds dignify with the name of philosophy. But neither in natural, moral, nor political knowledge, were his views enlarged. In his principles of government he was arbitrary ; in his disposition proud : he was ambitious far beyond his capacity ; and, though of a decent moral character, by no means agreeable in his manners. He was thought tinctured with the dissimulation and artifice by which ordinary minds often attempt to supply the want of great talents. By these means he was supposed to have come into power, and from the manifest earnestness with which he sought to disgust men of distinguished abilities and of popular principles, was believed to have formed a plan of governing the country by mere court favouritism. Far inferior to Pitt in powers, far inferior to the Duke of Newcastle in popular deportment, he was, by the majority of the nation, at once hated and disregarded. His talents were too trifling to enforce veneration ; nor did he, by an engaging demeanour, endeavour to win affec-

tion. His measures soon increased the odium which his character had excited. A determined resolution was imputed to him to elevate the friends of arbitrary power, and degrade the supporters of freedom.\* To his internal measures his external joined in stirring up discontent. A peace, made on much less advantageous terms than believed attainable, in the hour of universal victory, heightened the outcry. To inflame popular discontent, leaders are never wanting. Abuse of the Minister extended to abuse of his country, and rose to abuse of the royal family, and of the Sovereign himself. The King was represented as deviating from the principles and conduct of his two predecessors, and likely to imitate the despotic measures of the house of Stuart. He had been educated by an arbitrary tutor, and was ap-

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\* If we examine the particular appointments made under Lord Bute, we shall find that he neither elevated the friends of liberty nor of despotism—but *his own friends*. His brother, a very respectable man, was made Lord Privy Seal; his brother-in-law, Sir Robert Menzies, one of the gentlemen of the Police, with 400l. a year; no very great appointment to so near a connection of the Prime Minister.

prehended by many to have imbibed the same principles himself. The *virtual* dismission, first, of the greatest and most popular minister of the century, and, afterwards, of the Whig connections, made room for the tutor to be his minister, and added to the apprehension. Courtiers, indeed, asserted that, whereas his two predecessors had devoted themselves to one party, the present King was resolved to be of none. The Whigs replied, that the two former Kings had chosen their ministers from those who maintained the principles to which they owed their throne; but that Bute maintained principles diametrically opposite. From these circumstances, it was inferred by the Opposition, that the Sovereign himself must have a predilection for unlimited monarchy. In many subordinate departments North Britons were appointed to serve. According to popular speakers, writers, and their votaries, the promotion of Scotchmen portended the downfall of English freedom. National prejudice represented the Scotch, in *general*, as unfriendly to liberty. The character of



their patron rendered this charge not improbable, as to the creatures\* of Lord Bute in particular. Hatred of Bute and his countrymen became so prevalent as to be reckoned a characteristic of an English patriot. Writings in abundance fanned the flame—writings of all descriptions, from the vulgar ribaldry of ballads to the lively wit and plausible declamation of Wilkes, and the keen, poignant satire of Churchill. Lord Bute, wherever he went, was received with the most flagrant marks of contempt and hatred. Finding that court favour was too feeble a shield against the strong attacks of popular detestation, he retired from office.

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\* Some of the private favourites of Lord Bute were men of genius; for instance, Mr. John Home. Vanity might, no doubt, lead others to boast of an influence which they did not really possess. I remember I once met with a person who was, or is, a minister in Dumfriesshire, who talked much of his intimacy with Lord Bute, and even with his Majesty. The King, *according to this man's account*, would often ask him to sup with him, and in a very familiar stile. The usual mode of invitation, *he said*, was, *Dick Brown, will you eat an egg with me this evening?* A brother clergyman, Mr. Fergusson, of Moulin, very gravely asked him if he had read Beattie's Essay on Truth?

The resignation of Lord Bute did not appease the people. Their favourite orators and writers persuaded them that he was still the acting, though not the ostensible minister. It was generally believed that there was an interior cabinet, from which the responsible officers of state were obliged to receive directions. Popular writers persevered in their invectives against the court. One of the most violent of anti-ministerial publications was the *North Briton*.

Mr. Wilkes, member for Aylesbury, was more distinguished for pleasantry and colloquial talents, than for vigour of genius, eloquence, or political knowledge; more fitted for entertaining and diverting a company, than for informing and instructing a senate. His dissipation, to which his companionable qualities probably contributed, had greatly involved his circumstances. His profligate disregard of every thing that was sacred, virtuous, or decent, had ruined his character. In this situation, he had applied to Lord Bute for some employment which

might enable him to extricate himself from his difficulties. His character was so notorious, that Bute, who professed a great regard for religion, and especially for the established church, could not with any decency patronize him, though a man who, from his principles and desperate fortunes, might have easily been rendered the willing tool of any designs, however arbitrary. Disappointed, Wilkes, in revenge, resolved to pour out invectives against ministry, and established the North Briton for that purpose. The observations were so trite, vague, and superficial, that Lord Bute did not appear, for a considerable time, to pay any attention to the work. After his resignation, No. 45 was so audacious as to pour out the most false and scurrilous abuse against the Sovereign himself. Silent contempt would have suffered this paper speedily to pass into merited oblivion; but the imprudent eagerness of ministry to punish its author, raised both the paper and him to a notice which, probably, neither would have otherwise attained. Wilkes had before been little known,

except for his profligacy: the ministers raised him to eminence. His fortune had been entirely ruined by vice and extravagance: the prosecution paved the way to opulence. Discontent was already very great; the proceedings against him made it spread with astonishing rapidity.

Lord Mansfield, by far the ablest of those members who generally supported Government, was averse to the prosecution of Wilkes: 'I am,' said he, 'decidedly against the prosecution: his consequence will die away, if you let him alone; but by public notice of him, you will increase that consequence—the very thing he covets, and has in full view.'

The resentment, however, of the court overcame sound policy. The ministers, by apprehending him on a general warrant, overstepped the boundaries of law. This deviation from legal precision (though frequently precedent, according to Blackstone, in extraordinary cases) was construed,

by the popular leaders and their followers, to be a flagrant invasion of constitutional rights, and a justification of their fears respecting the arbitrary designs of the court. Indeed, not the popular leaders only, but one of the first sages of the law, Lord Chief Justice Pratt, (afterwards Camden) considered the apprehension as illegal. Even many of those, who, before, had been well-disposed towards Government, were seized with the contagion, and joined with its most violent opponents, in associating the ideas of **WILKES AND LIBERTY**. Wilkes took advantage of this delusion. It was a remark often made by him to his intimates, ‘ That the public was a goose, and that a man was a great fool not to pluck a feather.’ He set up a printing-press, published the proceedings against him at one guinea a copy, and considerably bettered his finances. Many men, of real talents and virtue, thought it a duty of patriotism to support, when oppressed, a man, whose private profligacy they abhorred. Perhaps they might reason on the principle so ably maintained by Cæsar,

in his speech on the discovery of Catiline's conspiracy, that deviations from established law are more dangerous when they regard worthless, than worthy characters, as the wickedness of the individual may draw away the attention of men from the arbitrariness of the measure; and thus the illegal act more easily steal into a precedent. The persecution of Wilkes was one of the principal causes of the internal discontents which marked the early part of the present reign. The infamous *Essay on Woman*,\* his expulsion from the House of Commons, the prosecution of the Lords, the indictments for blasphemy from the inferior courts, and the demands of his creditors, concurred in driving him to exile. He might himself

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\* Accompanied by notes, stated in the title-page to be the production of Bishop Warburton; for which the Lords prosecuted Wilkes, as guilty of a breach of their privileges. The pretended imputation of obscene writing to a Bishop of high character had not even the merit of originality. The Latin poems, intituled *MÆVRSIUS*, as obscene and profane as the *Essay on Woman*, (with infinitely more wit, in fine language, and very elegant verse), were so called from a German Bishop, of very great sanctity and virtue.

have been forgotten, had not subsequent injustice, at the instance of another ministry, rekindled the popular flame. But, though Wilkes was descending to oblivion, the dissatisfaction was by no means subsiding. The proceedings respecting the infamous Essay were not attributed to a laudable zeal in favour of piety and morality, but to resentment against a person who had exposed the measures of ministry, and was likely to receive, from the laws of his country, satisfaction for their illegal conduct. The Essay had not been published: a nobleman, once the intimate companion of Wilkes, and not more distinguished than he for virtue and holiness, procured a copy, from the confidence of friendship, and was the discoverer.\* Many of the most important measures of the legislature and executive government, many of the most important questions discussed in the courts of justice, were either derived

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\* Happy (says the witty Earl of Chesterfield, in one of his letters to his son) is it for this nation, that God hath been pleased to raise up, in Mr. Wilkes, a patriotic defender of our rights and liberties; and, in the Earl of Sandwich, so zealous a defender of our religion and morals!

from the proceedings of Wilkes and his abettors, or with them and their consequences intimately connected. These, therefore, must be held in view by all who would judge impartially of the great political actors.

While discontent was spreading in England, disaffection much more formidable was fast encreasing in America, which, if party at home did not engender, it certainly nourished. The discontent of America had its origin in a new system adopted by Government. This was, to raise, by authority of Parliament, a revenue from the colonies, which had hitherto taxed themselves. The system may be traced back to the administration of Lord Bute; an administration, which, combined with his subsequent influence, and the influence of those who imbibed his sentiments, has been the source of very momentous consequences to this country. One branch of the policy by which Bute thought his plans of government likely to be most effectually carried into execution, was to keep up a much larger peace esta-



blishment of the army than formerly. To support this additional army, an additional revenue was necessary; the more difficult, as Britain was very much exhausted by the war recently concluded. Mr. George Grenville, the ostensible Prime Minister, had devoted much of his time and attention to finance, and was esteemed a very skilful financier.\* His skill, however, was directed more to the productiveness of the duty than the policy of the taxation. In devising various schemes of revenue, it appeared to him that America, which had hitherto been left to tax herself, for her own internal establishments, should be obliged to contribute to the general support of the British empire. Several financial regulations of the British legislature, on that principle, respecting the American colonies, were, in America, represented as intolerable grievances in themselves, and as

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\* One of the most useful measures of that minister was the annexation of the Isle of Man to the Crown of Britain, by which smuggling was greatly repressed; and the Manx, instead of being subject to feudal aristocracy, enjoyed the blessings of the British Constitution.

parts of a plan to invade the liberty and property of the colonies. This opinion was countenanced by some of the greatest men in both houses of parliament. Dissatisfaction, on each side of the Atlantic, was increased by reciprocal action and re-action. Notwithstanding the prevalence of such sentiments at home and abroad, the Ministry proceeded with their plan of raising a revenue from America, and framed the famous *stamp-act*; an act which displayed great financial skill, 'as it was \* simple, practicable, and equitable in its operation, equally well adapted to all the colonies, and in its nature efficacious.' In America, objections were made, not merely to some of its details, but to the competency of the enactors. The right of the British Parliament to impose taxes on colonies, not represented in it, was disputed with great warmth. Very strong remonstrances were transcribed, from the provincial assemblies to the King and Par-

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\* See Stedman's History of the American War, vol. i. p. 28, Introduction.

liament. Resolutions were adopted, denying the right of Britain to impose taxes. Means were employed for forming a general combination, to prevent the measures of Government from taking effect. The resolutions of the Americans to oppose the stamp-act necessarily produced very great interruption to the commerce of this country. The mercantile sufferers joined with the political disapprovers of the scheme of taxation, and dissatisfaction with Ministry was very general. Mr. Grenville became very unpopular through the nation, and was now no great favourite at court.

The dismissal of the Grenville Administration is said to have been owing principally to the following circumstance:—On an illness of the King, a plan was formed for a regency, should any of the Princes come to the crown while a minor. By this plan, the Princess of Wales had been left out. Whether this was an unintentional omission, or that the Ministers did not think the interference of a female, advanced in years, necessary to

the government of a great empire, while there were men fully competent, I do not know; but it was believed to have given great offence to the members of the interior cabinet, who, being better acquainted with her Royal Highness's talents, could more justly appreciate the value of her counsel. The preterition of the Princess accelerated, if not caused, the dismissal of Ministry.

There were then two parties in opposition to Government,—Mr. Pitt's and the Duke of Newcastle's. From the age and infirmities of his Grace, the Marquis of Rockingham was considered as the acting leader. A favourable opportunity now offered itself to these parties, combining the principal ability and property of the kingdom, to overturn the system of court-favouritism; but the jealousies of the leaders prevented an union so desirable to the friends of liberty and their country. Overtures were made by the Court, first, to Mr. Pitt; but he boldly and patriotically insisted, that all the secret advisers, and their creatures, should be entirely excluded

from any share in the direction of affairs. To this the Court would not altogether agree. Proposals were then made to the Marquis of Rockingham and the Duke of Newcastle, who, with their party, acceded to the offers of the Court. Lord Rockingham was appointed Prime Minister, and the Duke of Newcastle President of the Council. This hasty acceptance of office by the Rockingham party displeased Pitt. It is morally certain, that if they had kept aloof for a short time, the joint force of their party and Pitt's would have compelled the court-junto, no longer supported by Grenville and the Bedford interest, to suffer them to form an administration on whatever terms they pleased. Now Lord Rockingham was Minister, with upright intentions, public confidence; but without that support from all the friends of freedom which would have been necessary to render him independent of favouritism.

Such was the state of affairs when Burke began to devote his extraordinary talents to public business.

Of his first introduction to the Marquis, he himself gives an account in his speech. ' In the year 1765,' he says, ' being in a very private station, far from any line of business, and not having the honour of a seat in this house, it was my fortune, by the intervention of a common friend, to become connected with a very noble person, then at the head of the Treasury department. It was indeed a situation of little rank and no consequence, suitable to the mediocrity of my talents and pretensions ; but a situation near enough to enable me to see, as well as others, what was going on ; and I did see in that noble person such sound principles, such an enlargement of mind, such clear and sagacious sense, and such unshaken fortitude, as have bound me, as well as others much better, by an inviolable attachment to him from that time forward.'

The Marquis offered to make Burke his own secretary, which he accepted. Mr. Hamilton was engaged with the opposite party, and claimed the assistance of Burke as his early friend. Various accounts have

been given of the separation of these two gentlemen. Some have imputed it to a difference in political sentiments, others to a private quarrel; whereas neither was the cause. There was no diversity in their political opinions, which might not have been compromised; and they had no private quarrel. They separated on the following grounds, as I am assured by an intimate friend of both, a member of the present parliament, high in the public estimation, who often conversed with each on the subject; and, besides, saw a letter written by Burke to Hamilton, explaining the grounds and motives of his conduct. Burke, soon perceiving that the abilities which he, and all who knew him, admired in Hamilton were not accompanied with the industry necessary to enable their possessor to rise high in the political world, often, both by word and letter, endeavoured to stimulate his friend to more exertion, but in vain. Finding his efforts ineffectual, he wrote a letter, the substance of which was an expostulation concerning Hamilton's indolence,

reminding him that he himself had a growing family to maintain, and must turn his talents to what would be useful ; and, on that account, that he must politically associate with men of more active exertions.

This, I can aver, was the substance of the letter which explained the political separation of Hamilton and Burke ; a separation which, though it prevented the continuance of their close intimacy, never rose to a quarrel.

However expedient it might be for Burke to break off political intercourse with Hamilton, as a most profound admirer of his genius, I do not rejoice at the commencement of his connection with the Marquis of Rockingham. From that time he may be considered as a PARTY MAN. BURKE OUGHT NOT TO HAVE STOOPED TO BE THE OBJECT OF PATRONAGE. Like his friend Johnson, he should have depended entirely on his own extraordinary powers. He would have been able uniformly to act as his own genius prompted him, instead of employing



his talents in giving currency to the doctrines of others—to have wielded his own club instead of a party distaff. In this part of their conduct, Johnson and Hume, the only two literary characters of the age who can be placed in the same rank with Burke, acted more worthily of the superiority with which they were blessed by nature. THEY ATTACHED THEMSELVES TO NO GRANDEES: THEY DID NOT DEGRADE THE NATIVE DIGNITY OF GENIUS, by becoming retainers to the ADVENTITIOUS dignity of rank. Johnson in his garret, the abode of independence, was superior to Burke in his villa, the fee of a party. The former earned his subsistence by his labour, the latter received his by donative. Johnson was independent,—Burke dependent. Besides, the very extraordinary talents of Burke did not tend to promote party objects more effectually than good abilities, many degrees inferior to his, and mere knowledge of business, would have done. But had he been as superior to others in party skill, as in genius and knowledge, the fertility of his fancy and the irritability

of his temper must often have prevented him from directing his skill steadily to the most useful ends. For so much irascibility a situation of contention was ill suited.

I am informed by the same friend of Hamilton and Burke, that the former gave an opinion concerning the latter, not undeserving of attention, as it illustrates some parts of his conduct.

*‘ Whatever opinion Burke, from any motive, supports, so ductile is his imagination, that he soon conceives it to be right.’*

There are certainly some parts of his conduct, for which this alledged defect in his powerful mind would account more favourably to his sincerity than his detractors have done. Guided by his imagination, his energetic understanding might have been led into erroneous conclusions, which a common mind would have escaped. Bucephalus, if he had not been strongly reined and skilfully managed, would have run away with Alex-

ander ; whilst a very ordinary rider of a common jade kept steadily on in the direct road.

Hamilton's opinion is certainly more honourable to Burke than that of those who assert he changed his doctrines from corrupt motives ; I trust, however, it will, in the course of this narrative, appear that HE DID NOT CHANGE HIS DOCTRINES ; but was, in the whole of his conduct, consistent. This is an opinion that will be firmly maintained by those who most accurately, minutely, and comprehensively examine his history. His imagination certainly operated very powerfully, and had a considerable influence on his opinions ; an influence, however, that, on every important subject, his reason vigorously controuled.

Mr. Hamilton used to observe, that Burke knew every subject of human knowledge except two—gaming and music. He said he was as ignorant of music as any pretended connoisseur in operas.

Burke, disapproving of Hamilton's party, would not join it, and, from a high spirit of equity, resigned the pension which Mr. Hamilton had procured for him, when he could not support the man by whom it had been obtained. This was a sacrifice to delicate integrity, which not many in his circumstances would have made, the support of whatever measures Mr. Hamilton's party might adopt not being an express condition of the grant, though, in Burke's refined sense of right, implied. This authentic and important fact is a striking illustration of the honourable principles by which he was actuated.

During the Rockingham Administration he was chosen member of parliament for Wendover, in Buckinghamshire. This borough was dependent on Lord Verney, between whom and Burke a close intimacy subsisted, an intimacy concerning the pecuniary consequences of which the friends of the one and of the other gave very different

accounts. These I shall notice in their proper place.

Burke, on his entrance into the House of Commons, employed himself in laying up stores of knowledge. He was of the same opinion with Cicero, that an orator ought to be acquainted with every great and important subject of art and nature. *Ac mea quidem sententia, nemo poterit esse omni laude cumulatus orator, nisi erit omnium rerum magnarum atque artium, scientiam consecutus.\**

He prepared himself, not by devoting his principal attention to balancing periods, but by studying history, poetry, and philosophy; by storing his mind with facts, images, reasonings, and sentiments. He even applied himself to subjects which do not *very often* occupy men of taste and science. He be-

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\* A puny pedant endeavoured to prove to me that I had here misquoted Cicero; according to the wiseacre in question it should be *consecutus sit*. Without entering into a grammatical discussion on so trivial a subject, it is sufficient to say, that in various editions of Cicero it is *erit*.

came intimately conversant with the writings of the fathers, and with the subtleties of school divines: with the principles and details of orthodoxy: the rise, progress, and effects of the manifold heresies: with the various means either of reason, or of force, employed for their disproof or extirpation. However frivolous so great a mind must have thought such distinctions and disputes in themselves, he deemed them of great importance in their operations, by illustrating the force, acuteness, and invention which the human mind can employ upon even frivolities or absurdities: and of great consequence in their effects; since, during the prevalence of prejudice and ignorance, they had a most powerful influence on the happiness of society. Indeed such subjects often called forth powers of understanding equal to those which have been applied to the investigation of useful philosophy. In pitching a bar equal strength may be displayed as in carrying corn: in unproductive amusement, as in productive labour.

He attended especially to political knowledge and parliamentary usage. His industry was also exercised in making himself acquainted with old records, patents, and precedents; so as to render himself complete master of office business, deeming no research too laborious, no attainment too minute, which was to fit him for the discharge of his duty. His diligence was also employed in preparatory public speaking. For that purpose he frequented the Robinhood society, to which many men of parts and information then resorted. He practised there the replies and contentions of eloquence; neglecting no means which he could devise for filling his mind, or facilitating his powers of communication. There was at that time in the society a baker of very considerable argumentative powers: with him Burke contended; and, by his own confession, derived from the contest very great advantage in readiness of reasoning and expression. He bestowed great pains on the composition of his writings and speeches. Those intended for the public he, notwithstanding his co-

piousness of thought, imagery, sentiment, and fluency of appropriate language, revised, and sometimes re-wrote. While he was devoting his mind to the intellectual part of eloquence, he did not neglect the mechanical. He paid considerable attention to the management of his voice and action, and to the whole of elocution : aware, that though delivery does not constitute eloquence, it, with many hearers, increases its effects. He often attended at the theatre, and acknowledged that he derived very great improvement in the art of speaking from Mr. Garrick. He retained, during life, however, in a great degree the Irish accent; although it was more obvious in familiar conversation than in his parliamentary speeches. His manner was less graceful and dignified than interesting, impressive, and persuasive. He procured his seat in 1765. His first speech was at the opening of the ensuing session, and on the usual motion for an address. The principal subject was the stamp-act, and the consequent disturbances in America. His maiden speech afforded such a display of



eloquence as excited the admiration of the house, and drew very high praise from its most distinguished member, Mr. Pitt.

The chief object which engaged the attention of the Rockingham Administration was America. The sentiments of opposite parties rendered their situation extremely delicate and difficult. On the one hand, the Grenville party, the devisers of taxation, and the framers of the stamp-act, insisted on coercive measures: on the other, Mr. Pitt and his adherents on a disavowal of the right of taxing America. Lord Rockingham consulted with Burke, whose advice was, 'to chuse a middle course between the opposite extremes : neither to precipitate affairs with the colonists, by rash counsels; nor to sacrifice the dignity of the crown and nation, by irresolution or weakness.' A plan was formed consonant to this opinion. To gratify the Americans, the stamp-act was repealed: to vindicate the honour of Britain, a law was passed declaring her right to legislate for America in taxation and every

other case ; and censuring the violence of the colonial opposition.

An attempt to satisfy two parties of totally contrary views, by not deciding the point at issue, is rarely either the offspring of wisdom or the parent of success. Such temporizing indecision generally dissatisfies both parties, and keeps the differences alive. The stamp-act had been opposed in America, not as inexpedient, but as unjust. They had not pretended they could not pay the impost, but that the imposers had no right to tax. Either the stamp-act was a grievance, or was not: if a grievance, the redress did not apply to the subject of complaint ; if not a grievance, why offer redress? If the objections of the colonies were groundless, it would have been just in Parliament to disregard them ; and wise or unwise, according to the value of the object, means of coercion, and probable result. If the right was ascertained, and we thought coercion prudent, the repeal would be absurd ; if not, the declaration of right would be a mere impotent bravado. If

the complaints of America were well grounded, then it would have been just and wise to renounce the exercise of an unjust power. Here was the maintenance of an obnoxious speculative principle, with the abandonment of practical benefit, for which only it could deserve support. The declaratory law tended to counteract, in America, the effect of the repeal. The measures of the Rockingham Administration were esteemed the result of good intentions, but of feeble and short-sighted policy.

These measures, recommended and supported by Burke, I cannot, consistently with impartiality, praise, as manifestations of either great political wisdom or vigour. His plan, at this his outset, was founded more upon speculative distinctions and barren generalities, than afterwards, when his great powers were, by experience, matured in the contemplation of affairs. I must confess, I think that *his sequestered exertions*, as a man of genius, literature, and philosophy, could have produced much greater benefit

to society, in the same period, than his political efforts during the Rockingham Administration.

The repeal of the stamp-act, and the declaratory law, were proposed and passed.

The Rockingham Ministry, though supported by the extraordinary genius and acquirements of Burke, were deficient in political experience and vigour ; qualities much more efficacious in the conduct of affairs, than, without them, the highest intellectual superiority. It must, however, be allowed, that they proposed several popular, and some good laws. These Burke supported with all the powers of his eloquence. The cider-act, was repealed : so that the jurisdiction of the excise was contracted, and great satisfaction afforded to those who considered the excise laws as dangerous to constitutional liberty ; an opinion much more conformable to the ideas of those who discussed their probable consequences in theory, than to the experience of those who contemplated the

actual effects. Resolutions were passed against general warrants, and the seizure of papers. Several regulations were made, favourable to commerce. Still, however, the Ministers were deemed unqualified for conducting the business of Government. Their dismissal from office was accelerated by the Chancellor Northington. They were endeavouring to form a constitution for the recently conquered province of Canada. Burke sketched for this purpose a plan of great ingenuity, but too refined and fanciful for being reduced to practice. He was still a political speculatist, rather than a wise statesman and experimental philosopher. When the scheme was shewn to the Chancellor, he condemned it in the most explicit terms. Going to the King, he represented the Ministers as totally inexperienced in business, and unfit for office. His Majesty commissioned Northington to consult Mr. Pitt on the formation of another ministry. To that illustrious man the appointment was principally left. Mr. Pitt would not admit any advice from his former friends and associates,

or share in the arrangements of the cabinet ; but combined them according to the dictates of his own will. Lord Temple, in particular, charged him with having acted the part of an imperious dictator, and refused the office of First Lord of the Treasury. The Administration which Pitt constituted, was made up of most heterogeneous materials. From its members, he was said, by his opponents, to expect and require very implicit submission to his mandates. He himself, now created Lord Chatham, took the Privy Seal. The Duke of Grafton was made First Lord of the Treasury, and Charles Townshend Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Burke wrote a defence of the Rockingham Administration, in a plain, simple style, without any of his usual digressive, though beautiful embellishments. His object is to appear a fair, candid witness, when he is really a dexterous advocate. In a *seeming narration* of the several measures, he embodies inferences most favourable to his friends.

Speaking of the principal act, he thus spoke;

‘ In that space of time, the distractions of the British empire were composed, by *the repeal of the American stamp-act*; but the constitutional superiority of Great Britain was preserved, by *the act for securing the dependence of the colonies*.

‘ Private houses were *relieved from the jurisdiction of the excise, by the repeal of the cider-tax*.

‘ The personal liberty of the subject was confirmed, by *the resolution against general warrants*.

‘ The lawful secrets of business and friendship were rendered inviolable, by *the resolution for condemning the seizure of papers*.’

He proceeds to their other acts. Here we may observe, that he merely takes for granted the two leading points in dispute with the

Grenville party, on the one hand, and the Chatham, on the other. Burke, in this defence, resembled a merchant, who, professing to give a fair, impartial statement of contested accounts, should take credit to himself for the principal items in dispute. He very prudently satisfies himself, as to the two main articles, with mere concise assertion, and reserves illustration and enlargement for less questionable measures. His defence, if not an impartial discussion of political proceedings, is a very artful, plausible, party memorial.

He soon after made an ironical reply to this serious defence. This is in the form of a letter, signed with the celebrated name of Whittington ; the author professing to be a tallow-chandler, and common-council-man, in Cateaton-street, and, like his name-sake, to think himself destined to be Lord Mayor before he died. The letter is addressed to the Public Advertiser. I shall make extracts, for the perusal of such of my readers, as



either have not read, or have forgotten the Epistle of Whittington.

“ *In the multitude of counsellors there is safety.* If SOLOMON means privy-counsellors, this nation ought to be safe beyond all others, since none can boast such a variety of ministers, and none can such a multitude of privy-counsellors.

‘ Ministers, now-a-days, are pricked down for the year, like sheriffs ; and if none were to make more of their offices than the last did, I fancy we should see them *fine off*. Now you can no more guess who is in office to-day, by the court-kalendar of last year, than you can tell the present price of stocks by LLOYD’S *List of Christmas 1745*.

‘ But the main design of my taking pen in hand, was to refute the silly author of a late silly publication, called *A short Account of a late short Administration*.

‘ This half-sheet accomptant shows his ill-humour in the very title ; he calls one year and twenty days a *short* Administration ; whereas I can prove, by the *Rule of Three Direct*, that it is as much as any Ministry in these times has a right to expect.

‘ Since the happy accession of his present Majesty, to this day, we have worn out no less than five complete sets of honest, able, upright Ministers, not to speak of the present, whom G—d long preserve !

‘ First, we had Mr. PITT’s Administration ; next, the Duke of NEWCASTLE’s ; then, Lord BUTE’s ; then, Mr. GRENVILLE’s ; and, lastly, my Lord ROCKINGHAM’s.

‘ Now, Sir, if you take a bit of chalk, and reckon from the seventh of October, 1760, to the thirtieth of July, 1766, you will find five years nine months, and thirty days ! which, divided by five, the total of Administrations gives exactly one year and sixty days each, *on an average*, as we say in the

city, and one day more, if they have the good fortune to serve in leap year.'

The letter proceeds to a very humorous and severe attack of Lord Chatham, and the Ministry which he had formed. It had very great influence in lessening the popularity of that statesman and his supporters.

Sir John Hawkins expressed to Johnson his wonder that Burke procured a seat. Sir John was not a man fitted to see extraordinary powers and acquirements previous to their production of fame and admiration. He knew Burke to be a man of very uncommon talents, when all the world joined in that opinion : Johnson, who had, from the first meeting, penetrated into his intellectual character, answered, that Burke would soon be known to be the first man in the house, as he would be in any society.

He was now well known in the fashionable world, and as much liked for the pleasingness of his address and conversation, as ad-

mired for his genius and acquirements. He became the intimate friend of Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose house was the receptacle of genius, learning, taste, and politeness. Mrs Montague courted his acquaintance. She was herself literary, and had written an essay on Shakspeare, to which Johnson, according to his biographer, did not do justice. He condemned it as deficient in general philosophical criticism ; when it was intended for a special object, merely to vindicate Shakspeare from the misrepresentation of Voltaire, by shewing that his observations, however witty, were not justified by the writings of our dramatic bard. It is rather a narrative of facts, and refutation of false assertions, than an investigation of principles ; and was useful in undeceiving those readers who judged from what Voltaire said of Shakspeare, instead of judging from Shakspeare himself. There are gradations in criticism, as in other branches of literature, from the verbal annotations of a grammarian to the investigation of a philosopher. Many

are the useful and agreeable performances, which are far short of Burke's Sublime, Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics, Johnson's Preface to Shakspeare and Lives of the Poets. Mrs. Montague's essay has, besides, the merit of being clearly and elegantly expressed ; and shews that its fair author had devoted much of her attention to literature and composition. Sir Joshua Reynolds, and many other men of taste and letters, highly esteemed Mrs. Montague, and even Burke thought favourably of her literary talents. Mrs. Montague and several other ladies, about this time, had evening assemblies, in which, instead of cards, they participated in the conversation of literary and ingenious men. One of the most eminent members, when the societies commenced, was Mr. Stillingfleet, who always wore blue stockings. As his conversation was very entertaining, they, when he was absent, used to say, we can do nothing without *the blue stockings* ; and by degrees the assemblies were called *blue stocking clubs*. From that time those ladies, who

are, or *pretend to be*, learned, or are in the *fashionable circles supposed to be* learned, are called *blue stockings*.

Burke frequently mingled in these societies, and was a great favourite, as his pleasing, unassuming manners, and apparent deference, made them suppose that he thought them as great scholars as they thought themselves. Johnson also frequently attended, was generally not impolite, and seldom shocked them by flat contradictions, or by exposing flimsy arguments.

In Scotland, about the same time, many ladies had a similar eagerness to enjoy the conversation of literary men ; but there, abstract divinity had the most attractive charms of all species of knowledge. A lady, with this propensity, was one day in company with Mr. Adam Ferguson, a Perthshire clergyman, of great strength of understanding and eminence in the church. The lady, addressing herself to him, said, ‘ Mr. Ferguson, I have dipt into predestinarian con-

troversy,' Mr. Ferguson replied, ' I must praise your prudence, Madam, in having only *dipt* into it, and recommend that mode in your other theological studies.'

Burke also became intimate with the highest society in the political circles ; besides the Marquis of Rockingham, with the Duke of Portland, Mr. Dunning, Sir George Saville, and many others. He was ever ambitious to connect himself with men of high rank, though from such HE could derive no lustre. He retained his seat in the club, which had now increased its numbers. The conversation of Burke there, as every where else, shewed a man much superior to ordinary scholars, whilst his engaging manners prevented his intellectual superiority from being offensive. He exemplified the perfect compatibility of the wisdom of a philosopher with the urbanity and elegance of a polished gentleman. He was no enemy to that enlivener of social parties, wine. One evening he observed that a hogshhead of claret, which had been sent them as a

present, was almost out, and proposed that Johnson should write for another, in such ambiguity of expression, as might have a chance of procuring it also as a gift. One of the company said Dr. Johnson shall be our dictator. ‘Were I,’ said Johnson, ‘your dictator, you should have no wine; it would be my business *cavere nequid detrimenti respublica caperet*:—wine is dangerous; Rome was ruined by luxury.’ Burke replied, ‘If you allow no wine as dictator, you shall not have me for master of the horse.’

Johnson, although he attributed every high species of intellectual excellence to Burke, would not allow that he possessed wit. From his speeches and writings, I trust I shall be able to shew many instances of wit, according to Johnson’s definition of that term, which agrees with its received acceptation: ‘A combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike.’ At the same time, although it may appear from Burke’s works, that he abounded in wit much more



than ordinary writers and speakers, yet the proportion of that quality in his mind to his other qualities was less than in many inferior minds. He was endued with a quick and delicate perception of humour and ridicule, and could paint with the happiest effect. His humour was versatile, either playful or sarcastical, poignant or strong, as best suited his purpose. He most frequently cut with a razor ; but could fell with a hatchet ; and not rarely united the keenness of the one with the force of the other.

That portion of his *reply*, which I have lately quoted, is a very sarcastic picture of the unsettled state of the executive government, and the fluctuation of counsels during the first part of the present reign. The following passage, from the same letter, concerning Lord Chatham and his new Ministry, is also very humorous: ‘ He has, once more, deigned to take the reins of government in his own hand, and will, no doubt, drive with his wonted speed, and raise a deal of dust around him. His horses

are all matched to his mind ; but as some of them are young and skittish, it is said he has adopted the new contrivance lately exhibited by Sir FRANCIS DELAVAL on Westminster Bridge ; whenever they begin to snort and toss up their heads, he touches the spring, throws them loose, and away they go, leaving his Lordship safe and snug, and as much at ease, as if he sat on a wool-pack.'

Although a friend to an aristocracy of property, talents, and virtue, he was not a very profound admirer of many of the nobility, not conceiving them eminent for the two last. Speaking one day on the debauchery of high life and its consequences : ' It is no wonder,' he said, ' the issue of the marriage-bed should be puny and degenerate, when children are formed out of the rinsing of bottles.'

The influence of Lord Chatham, even with the Ministry of his own choice, was of no long continuance. A want of union among

them was apparent during the succeeding session. It was a great, an irreparable misfortune to the country, that there was not a good understanding between the Earl of Chatham and the Rockingham party; between the favourite of the people and the Whig aristocracy, between the personal authority and the combined powers of the friends of freedom. Lord Chatham soon perceived that there was an influence behind the throne which counteracted his exertions. He made overtures to a coalition with the Rockingham party ; which might have been effectual sooner, but were then too late. Lord Rockingham conceiving Lord Chatham to have been instrumental in the dismissal of him and his friends, (a dismissal really arising from their own precipitate acceptance of office without sufficient force to controul the cabal) refused to have any intercourse with him. Private resentment appears here to have predominated over public spirit, most unfortunately for the nation. Talents, property, and patriotism, if conjoined, might have overturned favouritism ; especially as

the system of favouritism had then neither a large proportion of splendid *talents* for its *supporters*, nor of GREAT PROPRIETORS for its DUPES. Burke, however, and the other friends of the Marquis, in the early part of the succeeding Administration, were not very violent in their opposition. Lord Chatham was thwarted chiefly by the interior cabinet. Measures believed to originate from favouritism were proposed by Mr. Charles Townshend, which blew the discontents of America into a violent flame. Instead of the mode of internal taxation proposed by the stamp-act, and afterwards discontinued by its repeal, an external was adopted :—a tax was laid on various articles of the import trade of America. The principle of this new act was reprobated through the colonies. It was represented as a branch of the same plan of taxing America without its own consent. Its operation was violently opposed, and even successfully obstructed. The officers appointed to collect the new imposts were beaten and abused. In parliament, the succeeding session, the party

of which Burke was a member, on the address in answer to his Majesty's speech, reprobated the measures of Administration respecting the colonies. Burke made an oration on the subject; the tenor of which was to prove that the late resolutions were ill-timed and inexpedient, and the means employed for their execution unwise and ineffectual. In this speech he took occasion to direct his eloquence against the secret influence of which he alledged Ministry to be the tools. Of the interior cabinet, a main object, he said, was to separate friend from friend, party from party, that *public men* might the more easily be rendered *subservient* to the CABAL. This speech contained many of the heads of the subsequent essay on 'the Causes of the Discontents.'

Lord Chatham, finding that Ministry were proceeding in a plan totally opposite to his opinion, and under a direction which he deemed ruinous to the country, having, in spite of age and ill health, made every effort that patriotism could prompt, to give things a contrary bias, and finding his exertions

vain, resigned in disgust. The magnanimous, patriotic mind of the great Pitt would not descend to receive the mandates of court favourites; to truckle to men whom he despised. This was an independence of mind not always the concomitant even of conscious genius.

At the close of this session parliament was dissolved. Burke, who had been only two years a member, was already considered as the first orator in the house, at a time when there was in it a very splendid assemblage of talents. His orations at first were more tinctured with the metaphysical learning which had occupied a great part of his early life, than is to be perceived in the speeches of more mature moral and political experience. His was the eloquence of a very great mind, accustomed to generalization; but became afterwards more marked by practical wisdom.

Burke was re-elected for Wendover. The new parliament met in November, 1768.

An act passed during this session which excited great disturbances in and out of parliament. This was the famous expulsion of Wilkes, and the consequent proceedings.

Wilkes, when the Ministers who had persecuted him were dismissed from office, and the Marquis of Rockingham was appointed, had returned to London. The Marquis and his friends, whatever might be their opinion of his private character, had strongly expressed their disapprobation of his unjust treatment. From them Wilkes hoped for compassion for his sufferings, and redress for the injuries he had received. To fortify his cause by private influence, he prevailed on Mr. Maclean, an intimate friend of Burke, to second him in applying to that gentleman. Burke acquainted him, from the Marquis, that he was disposed to serve him, but would not pledge himself to any specific mode. Wilkes conceived that, as the Minister courted popularity, he, having been so strenuous in a popular cause, might command his own terms. He accordingly

demanded a general pardon, five thousand pounds in cash, and a pension on the Irish establishment. Burke refused to carry so presumptuous a requisition to his patron ; nor would any other person make so extravagant an application.

Disappointed by his own confident folly, and not being able to procure the reversal of his outlawry, Wilkes was obliged to return to exile. When the Duke of Grafton became Prime Minister, he wrote him to the following purport : \* ‘ He congratulated the country on the promotion of his Grace, and intreated him to mediate his pardon from the King ; declaring, that he had never, in any moment of his life, swerved from the duty and allegiance he owed to his Sovereign, and professing in every thing to submit to his Majesty’s clemency. Your Grace’s noble manner of thinking,’ says he, ‘ and the obligations I have formerly received, which are still fresh in my mind, will, I hope, give a full propriety to this address ; and I am sure, a heart glowing with the sacred zeal of

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\* Belsham’s *Memoirs of George III.* vol. i. p. 233.



liberty must have a favourable reception from the Duke of Grafton.'

This application was neglected. Mr. Wilkes's hope of pardon being extinguished, he resolved to make his enemies feel his resentment. At the present crisis, the conduct of the Court appeared wholly unaccountable. There was plainly no just medium between the opposite determinations of rigour and lenity. If the former were adopted, by putting into immediate execution his sentence of outlawry, his projects of revenge and ambition would have been easily and completely defeated. If, on the contrary, the wiser and more generous plan of lenity were preferred, a full and free pardon ought to have been granted: with his persecution, his influence and popularity would have ceased. To halt between the two opinions was an infallible proof of weakness in the cabinet counsels.

On the dissolution of parliament Wilkes came from Paris to London, to offer himself

a candidate for the city. He was received with rapturous applause by the people; but rejected on the poll, through Harley, the Lord Mayor, a strenuous supporter of the Court. The magistrate was grossly insulted by the populace. Wilkes immediately offered for Middlesex. Supported not only by the lower people, but by men of the first opulence in the city, and men of the first talents at the bar and in the senate, he was returned by a very great majority. Soon after he surrendered himself to the jurisdiction of the King's Bench.

A sentence was passed condemning him to imprisonment for two years; to pay a fine of a thousand pounds, and to find security for his good behaviour for seven years. The people, enraged at this sentence, which an arbitrary alteration of records made still more hateful, forcibly rescued him from the officers who were taking him to prison, and made a triumphant procession with him through the city. As soon as the multitude dispersed he surrendered himself to the Mar-

shal of the Bench. The day of the first meeting of the new parliament, numbers assembled in St. George's Fields, expecting to see Wilkes go from the place of his confinement to the House of Commons. As they became very riotous, the Surrey Magistrates were obliged to interfere, and at last to call the military. The mob abused and attacked the soldiers: they being ordered to fire, unfortunately killed an innocent man. Government expressed the highest approbation of the justices and the troops, in a letter from Lord Weymouth, Secretary of State, to the Surrey Magistrates. A copy of this letter was procured by Wilkes, who published it, with a very severe and violent prefatory attack. Parliament meeting, voted this preface an insolent, scandalous, and seditious libel. Wilkes, avowing himself the author, was expelled the house. On a new election he was again unanimously chosen. The house then declared, that Mr. Wilkes, being expelled, was incapable of sitting in the same parliament; and that, therefore, the election was void. He was chosen a

third time, and the third election declared void. At the fourth Col. Luttrell stood candidate. For Wilkes there were twelve hundred and forty-three, for Luttrell two hundred and ninety-six. Wilkes was returned, but his name was erased from the writ by order of the house, and Luttrell's substituted in its place.

Some of our readers may have forgotten the series of proceedings concerning this noted demagogue. Besides their general importance in the questions they involved, and the very great political and literary exertions on both sides which they excited, they have a special importance to a biographer of Burke. They more fully unfolded the powers of his eloquence in the house than had been hitherto done; and from the closet they called forward the most able, comprehensive, and profound account of the political state of the country. I have, therefore, thought this summary concerning Wilkes not irrelative to the subject of my work.

Opposition consisted of two parties of very different views and principles, though agreed in their disapprobation of the Grafton Ministry :—the party of which Lord Rockingham was the nominal leader, and Burke the most distinguished orator; and that of which Mr. Grenville was the head.

The author of the Memoirs of Mr. Burke draws the following character of Grenville's and of Burke's eloquence. ' Mr. Burke's eloquence was splendid, copious, and animated; sometimes addressing itself to the passions, much oftener to the fancy; but *very seldom to the understanding*. It seemed fitter for shew than debate; for the school than the senate; and was calculated rather to excite applause than to produce conviction. Mr. Grenville's was plain, yet correct; manly, argumentative, trusting more to genuine candour, to the energy of reason, and the well displayed evidence of truth, than to the rainbow colours of fine imagery, or the blaze of artificial declamation. Mr. , naturally ardent and impetuous,

took fire at the smallest collision ; and the sudden bursts of his anger, or his vehemence, when all around him was calm, could only be compared to the rant of intoxication in the presence of a sober and dispassionate company : Mr. Grenville, even when attacked with the utmost asperity, shewed a perfect command of temper.

Coinciding in some parts of this opinion, I by no means accede to all. I am far from thinking that Burke addresses himself *very seldom to the understanding*. To me his speeches appear to have, besides their imagery, a greater abundance and variety of knowledge, more forcible reasoning and more enlarged philosophy, than those of Mr. Grenville, or almost any orator of any age or country. So far from seldom addressing the understanding, I think he commonly directed to it more of argument, and of general principle, than the mere subject required ; or, perhaps, some of the audience could comprehend. His presents to intellect, so far from being scanty, are

too often profuse, and more valuable than necessary for the purpose : where a moderate sum of silver would suffice, he lavishes heaps of gold. For parliamentary business, however, I agree with this author, in thinking the clear, sound understanding, senatorial experience, and steady temper of Grenville, fitter than the brilliant fancy, philosophical expansion, and impetuous passions of Burke. Such a mind, and such habits, as Grenville's, rendered him as much fitter for being the leader of a party, a prime minister, a conductor of affairs, as the mind and habits of Burke rendered him for being a poet, an historian, a philosopher.

About this time two pamphlets appeared ; the first intituled *The present State of the Nation*, written either by Grenville, or under his direction ; the second, intituled *Observations on the present State of the Nation*, by Burke. Grenville's pamphlet goes over the war, the peace, the finances, trade, foreign politics, and the constitution, with a view to shew the country to be in a very bad

state, and its situation to be owing to a deviation from the plan of politics, especially of finance, adopted by the Grenville Ministry.

Mr. Grenville goes through a vast variety of detail, on our trade, revenue, colonies, and public funds. He accompanies his account with very long, minute, and intricate calculations. He endeavours to shew, that we are in a much inferior situation to France, whose state he details with equal minuteness, and equally confident assertion of exactness. America was, he attempts to prove, in so flourishing a condition, as to be able, with great ease, to supply the deficiency of Britain. To this great source of finance he subjoins several smaller, from Ireland, India, and other settlements. By an adoption only of the Grenville plans in general, and respecting America in particular, was this country to be saved.

Burke, considering *the State of the Nation* as in itself erroneous, calculated to diffuse



unfounded alarms, and as implying censure on the Marquis of Rockingham, answered it in what he intituled *his Observations*. He shewed, that when a man of genius encounters a man of detail in the fields of literature, he can, with great ease, drive him from his own ground. The man of genius, can, without any great effort of industry, master the details which constitute the strong holds of his adversary. Burke here demonstrates the vast extent and particularity of his commercial and political knowledge. He follows Grenville over the wide ground he had taken; proves him to be wrong in his alledged facts and calculations, and consequently in his inferences. He enters into a detail of our manufactures and trade,—internal, with our own colonies and settlements, and with foreign countries; describes its actual state, and the various circumstances which may affect it in future. He takes a review of our revenue and public funds. He next proceeds to the resources, debt, and expenditure of France, and by an accurate statement of facts, and the clearest

calculations, shews Grenville's assertion respecting the superiority of our rival to be unfounded. He denies an increase of revenue to be practicable from Ireland. Respecting both Ireland and America, he proves the absurdity of expecting a revenue from a detached and distant part of the empire, merely because he supposes it able to bear taxation. Here he gives the outlines of Mr. Grenville's financial character. 'It is,' says he, 'the constant custom of this author, in all his writings, to take it for granted, that he has given you a revenue, whenever he can point out to you where you may have money, if you can contrive how to get at it; and this seems to be the master-piece of his financial ability.' Mr. Grenville had proposed two hundred thousand a year to be levied from the Americans. 'He is,' says he, 'satisfied to repeat gravely, as he has done a hundred times before, *that the Americans are able to pay it*. Well, and what then? Does he lay open any part of his plan how they may be compelled to pay it, without plunging ourselves into calamities that out-

weigh ten-fold the proposed benefit ? or does he shew how they may be induced to submit to it quietly ? or does he give any satisfaction concerning the mode of levying it ? He ridicules and exposes the folly of expecting any other revenue from our settlements in India, than what results from duties on the trade from that country, and from the lease of the monopoly according to the charter. More advanced in political wisdom than when he advised a law declaratory of a right, without any practical benefit, he leaves barren generalities for expediency. ‘ To talk,’ says he, ‘ of the rights of sovereignty is quite idle ; different establishments supply different modes of public contribution. Our trading *companies*, as well as individual importers, are a fit subject of revenue by customs. Some establishments pay us by a *monopoly* of their consumption and their produce. This, nominally no tax, in reality comprehends all taxes. Such establishments are our colonies. To tax them, would be as erroneous in policy as rigorous in equity. Ireland supplies us by furnishing troops in war, and by

bearing part of our foreign establishment in peace. She aids us at all times by the money that her absentees spend amongst us ; which is no small part of the rental of that kingdom. Thus Ireland contributes her part. Some objects bear port duties ; some are fitter for an inland excise. The mode varies ; the object is the same. To strain these from their old and inveterate leanings, might impair the old benefit, and not answer the end of the new project. Among all the great men of antiquity, *Procrustes* shall never be my hero of legislation ; with his iron bed, the allegory of his government, and the type of some modern policy, by which the long limb was to be cut short, and the short tortured into length. Such was the state-bed of uniformity ! He would, I conceive, be a very indifferent farmer, who complained that his sheep did not plough, or his horses yield him wool ; though it would be an idea full of equality. They may think this right in rustic economy, who think it available in the politic ;

*Qui Bævium non odit, amet tua carmina Mævi !  
Atque idem jungat vulpes, et mulgeat hircos.*

He proceeds to an attack upon the Grenville Administration; which, though somewhat exaggerated, is in many respects just; vindicates the Rockingham Ministry, not without evident partiality; makes a very high panegyric on his patron, and the connections of the party; and animadverts, with cutting severity, on their successors in office.

There is one excellence which I shall have occasion frequently to remark in the writings and speeches of Burke. They abound in the wisest general observations, descriptions of mankind, and lessons of conduct. This essay contains a very striking picture of political profligacy, in its progress and consequences. ‘There is something,’ he says, ‘uncertain on the confines of the two empires which they first pass through, and which renders the change easy and imperceptible. There is even a sort of splendid impositions, so well contrived, that, at the very time the path of rectitude is quitted for ever, men seem advancing into some nobler road of public conduct. Not that such im-

positions are strong enough *in themselves*, but a POWERFUL INTEREST, often concealed from those whom it affects, works at the bottom, and secures the operation. Men are thus debauched away from their legitimate connections—gradually they are habituated to other company. Certain persons are no longer frightful when they come to be serviceable. As to their OLD FRIENDS, the transition is easy—from friendship to civility; ~~from~~ civility to enmity: *few are the steps from dereliction to persecution.*

The nomination of Luttrell involved in it a totally different question from the expulsion of Wilkes. The expulsion was a question of individual conduct; the nomination of constitutional right—whether, by the laws of the land, expulsion constituted disqualification. Burke made a most masterly speech on this subject, contending, and indeed proving, that there was neither statute nor applicable precedent resting the incapacitation of persons to be members of parliament in any thing but an act of the legis-

lature. The substance of this speech is published only in the Parliamentary Debates. In the state in which they give it, it displays a most extensive and accurate acquaintance with parliamentary history and cases, and the soundest notions of political expediency.

This session American affairs afforded Burke a subject for the exhibition of his eloquence and wisdom. It was proposed by Ministry to revive the statute of Henry VIII. by which the King is empowered to appoint a commission in England for the trial of treason committed beyond seas. Against this proposed revival Burke directed the force of his powers. The plan of bringing delinquents from the province of Massachusetts to England, to be tried, was, he contended, in its principle inconsistent with the law of England. In this country, a man charged with a crime is tried near the place where it is alledged to have been committed; that, if innocent, he may have the means of acquittal. It was iniquitous in its operation. By taking the accused to an immense dis-

stance from his friends and business, it rendered it impossible, unless to men of great opulence, to endure the expence of bringing the evidence necessary to vindication. The judges, who were to be of the mother country, would be persons against whom the accused was supposed to have transgressed ; the prosecution, in effect, would be condemnation, and so the great purposes of justice entirely defeated. Even if the mode proposed were just, it would be attended with such difficulty of execution as would, in every prudential view, amount to impracticability. The attempt would irritate the colonies, whilst its inefficacy would not restrain dangerous practices. Unfortunately, experience confirmed the anticipation of sagacity,—the proposal exasperated the Americans, the plan afforded no obstruction to their disorders.

Whilst those measures of the House of Commons, respecting the colonies, which Burke opposed, were causing disturbances in America, the proceedings respecting



Wilkes were exciting discontents at home. They were considered as a gross violation of the rights of election. An alarm for the constitution was spread; an alarm much beyond its cause; since, admitting one unconstitutional assumption of power to have taken place, it did not follow, from a particular fact, that a general system was endangered.

Dr. Johnson's 'False Alarm' endeavours to prove that the power of disqualification of expelled members was necessary to the House of Commons, as expulsion, with re-eligibility, would be a nominal not a real punishment. But the question was not what power it might be expedient that the House of Commons should possess, but what powers from statute or custom it actually did possess. To his arguments on expediency it might be replied, the house could have repeatedly expelled Wilkes if they thought him still to deserve expulsion.— If they could prove it to be expedient that expulsion should constitute disqualification,

let a bill to that effect be moved ; and if approved of by the other branches of the legislature, passed into a law. Dr. Johnson, aware that expediency alone would not support his position, attempts to adduce precedents, but fails in their application. It is to be observed here, that Burke, and many others, who opposed the return of Colonel Luttrell, strongly disapproved of many parts of Mr. Wilkes's conduct as morally profligate and politically seditious.

The proceedings of the Grafton Administration respecting Wilkes, and other subjects, gave rise to the celebrated *Letters of Junius*. These compositions, in clearness, neatness, precision of style, in such arrangement and expression as give the materials fully the desired effect, have few equals among political publications. Unclaimed by any, they have been ascribed to several authors, among others to Burke. Most of the writers against Junius, in the periodical publications of the times, address him as an Irishman ; and at the same time endeavour

to reproach Burke for being of that nation. One of them, Antimalagrida, in abusing the Marquis of Rockingham, makes one article of his invective, that he was guided by an Irish Secretary. Some of Burke's friends supposed him the author, as the only man equal to the performance. On that ground Johnson, according to Boswell, once thought him the writer ; but on his spontaneously declaring the contrary, was convinced by his assertion. ' I should,' he said, ' have believed Burke to be Junius, because I know no man but Burke who is capable of writing these letters ; but Burke spontaneously denied it to me : the case would have been different had I asked him if he was the author, a man may think he has a right to deny it, when so questioned as to an anonymous publication.' Even spontaneous disavowal of a performance, by many imputed to him, and of which the supposition of his being the writer might have exposed him to prosecution, is not a disproof. As there is no *testimony* to prove, either who was the writer, or that Burke was not, our opinion

must be formed from probability. *Those who impute the Letters of Junius to Burke* may probably reason in some such manner as the following:—They are evidently the production of very considerable talents. There were very few writers of the times equal to the task. They must have been written by a person inimical to the Grafton Administration, and to the secret influence by which it was believed to be now guided. In the general opinion, and in the particular circumstances of Burke, we can find probable motives which might have induced him to commence and continue the attack. The Duke of Grafton had been brought into Administration by the Rockingham party, and was represented as having betrayed that nobleman and his friends: either, on that account, or because he succeeded to the Ministry, he was very obnoxious to the friends of the Marquis. Hence it was natural to impute a severe attack on him to one of that party, in which the pre-eminence of genius unquestionably belonged to Burke. He, in the house, poured forth his

eloquence in attacks upon the Grafton Administration in general, and more particularly on those of its acts which are the principal butts of Junius's invective. Burke strenuously maintained the existence of a system of court-favouritism, and joined in ascribing to its influence the dismissal of his friends. He reprobated the measures which he supposed to originate from that source, and the principal agents of the junto. Hence it was very probable that the Duke of Bedford, the negociator of Lord Bute's peace and the opposer of the Rockingham interest, should excite the displeasure of Burke. The Whig party considered the doctrines advanced by the Lord Chief Justice on the bench as inconsistent with constitutional liberty, and as a branch of the same Tory or rather Jacobite origin. Burke, in the House of Commons, frequently displayed his eloquence against the doctrines and practices of Lord Mansfield. He particularly execrated the proceedings respecting the Middlesex election. In all these circumstances he coincided with Junius. In con-

sidering the intellect of Junius, it was very easy to see that not many of that, or of any other party were equal to the letters. In all there is closeness and pungency, but in some there is richness of classical allusion, and fertility of imagery. The imagery, besides, frequently resembles that for which Burke's writings are so eminently distinguished. In one of his letters to the Duke of Grafton, Junius borrows metaphors from a source very usual with the orator. ' Lord Bute's views and situation required a creature void of all these properties ; (abilities, judgment, and integrity) and he was forced to go through every division, resolution, composition, and refinement of political chemistry, before he happily arrived at the *caput mortuum* of vitriol in your Grace. Flat and insipid in your retired state, but brought into action, you became vitriol again.' Afterwards, ' but you have discovered your purposes too soon ; and instead of the modest reserve of virtue, have shewn us the termagant chastity of a prude, who gratifies her passions with distinction, and prosecutes

one lover for a rape, whilst she solicits the rude embraces of another.' The rapidity of Burke's genius often hurries him into a mixture of figures. This too is frequently the case with Junius: thus in a letter to the Duke of Grafton, 'with what countenance can you take your seat at the Treasury Board, or in Council, when you feel that every *circulating* WHISPER is at your expence alone, and STABS you to the heart!'

From both the reasoning and style of some of Junius's letters, many think there are grounds for believing Burke to be the author.

*Those*, on the other hand, *who conceive him not to have been Junius*, may probably reason in the following manner:—On considering the intellectual qualities of Burke and of Junius, it would appear that there is so great a dissimilarity between the one and the other, as to justify us in disbelieving Burke to be the writer. As to the intellectual character of Junius, although we must

allow it very considerable excellence, we may easily perceive that it is of a different kind and inferior degree to that of Edmund Burke. In Junius we have more of perspicacity than of expansion; more of pungency than of force. His weapon is the sharp arrow of Teucer, not the massy sword of Achilles. He rapidly penetrates into particulars, but does not rise to great general views. He is rather an expert lawyer, speaking closely to his own side, than a philosophical politician, embracing the interests of kingdoms and of mankind. Whatever Burke has spoken, or avowedly written, goes beyond the mere object of the hour, and makes accuracy of detail and acuteness of reasoning subservient to the establishment or confirmation of some general truth. Junius keeps directly to his subject: the rapidly associating mind of Burke pursues his thoughts through a train of combinations, not always necessary to the specific object, though always pleasing, interesting, or instructing. Junius is thoroughly acquainted with the *road* in which he chuses to steer, but attends little to its bearings,



any farther than they are necessary for piloting his bark: Burke surveys the *whole coast*. In Junius there is neatness and justness of allusion: in Burke, richness, beauty, and grandeur of imagery. The style of Junius is clear, correct, and precise, with no great variety: the style of Burke copious, brilliant, forcible, with wonderful variety, appropriate to the diversity of subjects and objects. Either Burke did not write Junius's Letters, or wrote very differently from his general manner; and employed a strict, watchful, and uniform attention for which we can assign no adequate motive in restraining his intellectual powers from their usual exertions and expatiations.

Besides these general reasons of intellectual character, which contravene the belief that Burke is the author, there are special reasons from his opinions. Burke had been a member of the Rockingham Administration, and was the supporter of that party, its principles and measures: there are passages in Junius which shew the author to be

neither. In a letter to the Duke of Bedford he says, ' Apparently united with Mr. Grenville, you waited until Lord Rockingham's Administration should dissolve in its own weakness.' These were not the sentiments of Burke respecting the administration of his friend and patron. Again, in a letter to Mr. Horne Tooke, speaking of Lord Chatham: ' He has publicly declared himself a convert to triennial parliaments; and though I have long been convinced that this is the only possible resource we have left for preserving the substantial freedom of the constitution, I do not think we have a right to determine against the integrity of Lord Rockingham or his friends. Other measures may undoubtedly be supported by argument, as better adapted to the disorder, or more likely to be obtained.' Burke, it is well known to every man acquainted with parliamentary history, was uniformly averse to triennial parliaments. One of the letters disapproves of the opposition made to Mr. Grenville's laws respecting America: Burke always approved of that opposition, and

was the constant opponent of American taxation.

Were I to hazard an opinion on the subject, it would be, that Burke was not most frequently the writer of Junius's letters, if he was of any. Though very excellent, they are not equal, nor peculiarly similar, to his productions. They have been imputed to Lord George Germain, but I cannot accede to that opinion. Lord George is close and correct; in those qualities he resembles Junius: he does not abound in point and imagery; and in those qualities does not resemble Junius. I think Lord George Germain not Junius, because inferior to the latter; Burke, because superior.

The letters resemble the pungency and keen satire of Richard Burke more than the wisdom of Edmund. Richard, besides, was a man of a dissipated life, and consequently more likely to be acquainted with the history of ministerial gallantries, which occupy no small portion of Junius's animadversions.

In all this, however, there is hitherto no certainty. The time may arrive when the mystery will be unfolded. The discovery of this hidden champion of anti-ministerial politics may be, perhaps, in the power of a very eminent politician, still alive, and the first philological philosopher of the age,

As the Ministry were very unpopular, Junius reigned paramount over all political writings for two years. It has been said that the very forcible attack of Junius by Johnson in his 'Falkland Island,' so completely overthrew the popular champion, that he never resumed the fight. Though inferior to Johnson, it is not likely Junius would have been frightened from the field, even by that formidable opponent; especially as he fought under a mask, and could watch his own time and opportunity. In fact, Junius wrote for a year after the publication of 'Falkland Island.' That pamphlet was brought out in spring 1771, and immediately attracted the notice of all parties; and Junius did not discontinue his warfare till spring

1772, and some of the boldest of his letters to Lord Mansfield and the Duke of Grafton were written towards the close of 1771. It is more probable, that as the principal object of his attacks (the Duke of Grafton) had retired from office, the Duke of Bedford was dead, and all said of the Middlesex election that could be said, Junius gave over his writings when their object no longer existed.

Burke had now gotten a very pleasant villa near Beaconsfield, in Buckinghamshire. Various accounts have been given of his fortune at the time this purchase was made. The most general and best authenticated was, that the Marquis of Rockingham advanced ten thousand pounds on a simple bond, never intended to be reclaimed: that Dr. Saunders of Spring Gardens advanced five thousand, secured by a mortgage. It is certain that at Dr. Saunders's death, a mortgage on Burke's estate was found by the executor for that sum, and that the principal was considerably increased by ar-

rears of interest. The whole price was twenty-three thousand pounds. It had been said, that Burke, his brother Richard, and Mr. William Burke, were very successful speculators in the funds. Edmund afterwards, as I shall shew, proved that he was totally unconcerned in any such transaction. How the remaining eight thousand pounds were procured I have not been able to ascertain.

As one of the freeholders of Buckinghamshire, Burke drew up a petition concerning the Middlesex election, and praying for a new parliament. The petition was adopted by the county meeting, and presented by him and some other freeholders of note. I shall transcribe the material parts, as they shew, in a few words, both the sentiments of Burke respecting the specific subject, and the comprehensive view he takes of political causes and effects.

*‘ By the fundamental principles of the constitution, all the electors of Great Britain have an*

undoubted right to elect, by a majority of legal votes, any man not rendered incapable by the law of the land. We are thoroughly sensible that the House of Commons may also judicially determine on the election of members of their own body; but the law of the land cannot be superseded by any resolution of either house of parliament, no new incapacity can be enacted except by the authority of the legislature. The claim of either house of parliament to make ordinances which should have the force of laws, hath once already proved fatal to the crown and to the constitution, and will, we fear, if the exercise of it be tolerated, prove again destructive to both. (After mentioning the election of Colonel Luttrell :) Justly alarmed at an attempt of this formidable nature, duty to our Sovereign, and to our injured country, calls upon us to represent, with all possible respect, the fatal consequences with which this violation of the rights of free election must be attended, and we earnestly implore the intervention of your Majesty's wisdom and goodness to afford, by legal and constitutional methods, the means for removing this unexampled grievance.

This petition, though explicit and firm, is temperate and decorous. The petition from Yorkshire, drawn up by Burke's friend, Sir George Saville, was in a similar style. Some were presented of a very different nature, being in the style of imperious remonstrances and licentious abuse; among the rest, that from the Livery of London, as unlike the one supported by Burke, as the principles of a turbulent DEMOCRAT are to those of a moderate constitutional WHIG.

The political opinions and principles of Burke were about this time published at considerable length, in a pamphlet intituled 'Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents.'

Burke's 'Thoughts on the Discontents' deserves the studious perusal of the politician, as it marks with great impartiality the *state of the public mind* at that period. The work endeavours to find the causes of the prevailing opinions and sentiments in the condition of the country, and the conduct



of the Court. It calls for the peculiar attention of the biographer, as a LAND-MARK of BURKE'S OWN DOCTRINES respecting the British Government, and the means of carrying it into the most successful effect.

The fact, that discontents had existed during a great part of the present reign, and that they had risen to an alarming height, being very obvious, and denied by none, Burke presumes it to be generally admitted : he proceeds, therefore, to investigate the cause, to describe the modes of its operation, to display its effects, and to propose a remedy. Courtiers ascribed the prevailing dissatisfaction to the seditious wickedness of libellers, and other demagogues ; causes which have very frequently produced groundless discontents, but not always. According to the court party, affairs had been managed with consummate wisdom and remarkable moderation ; if the character these persons gave of themselves were just, then there certainly could be no foundation for the discontents. The pre-

mises, however, Burke does not admit: he contends, that there were strong grounds for dissatisfaction. . . Mr. Burke's hypothesis is, that a plan had been formed by the Court, and in a great degree executed, to govern by the private influence of its favourites. The production is a very ingenious and consistent theory, founded on this assumed \* principle.

The various acts of Administration he attempts to deduce from a system of making every part of government depend upon a junto of court favourites. '*To secure,*' he says, '*to the Court the unlimited and uncontrolled use of its own vast influence, under the sole direction of its own private favour,* has been for some years the great object of policy. If this were compassed, the influence of the Crown must of course produce all the effects which the most sanguine partizans of

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\* We say assumed, because, whether actually true or false that such a junto did exist, notwithstanding all the clamour of the Opposition, its existence was never satisfactorily proved.

the Court could possibly desire. Government might then be carried on without any concurrence on the part of the people,—without any attention to the dignity of the greater, or to the affections of the lower sorts. To this plan of making every part of government dependent on a junto of court favourites, he attributes the various evils of that time. The court junto he calls *a double cabinet*.

Having, in the passage I have quoted, described the alledged object of the real or supposed band of courtiers, he proceeds to the means: ‘These were, to draw *a line which should separate the Court from the Ministry* ;’ to render the ostensible Ministers merely the agents of this favourite junto. ‘By this operation, two systems of administration were to be formed; one, which should be in the real secret and confidence; the other, merely ostensible, to perform the official and executory duties of Government. The latter were alone to be responsible; whilst the real advisers, who enjoyed all the

power, were effectually removed from all the danger.'

' Secondly, *A party under these leaders was to be formed in favour of the Court against the Ministry.*

' Thirdly, Parliament was to be brought to acquiesce in this project. It was to be taught by degrees a total indifference to the persons, rank, influence, abilities, *connections*, and character of the Minister of the Crown. A cabal of *the closet and back-stairs* was substituted in the place of a national administration.'

His hypothesis proceeds to the progress, success, and consequences of favouritism, and very eloquently shews its hurtfulness to a free government. ' A PLAN OF FAVOURITISM *for our executory government* is essentially at variance with the plan of our legislature. One great end, undoubtedly, of a mixed government, like ours, is, that the Prince shall not be able to violate the laws.

But this, even at first view, is no more than a negative advantage; an armour merely defensive. It is, therefore, next in order, and equal in importance, *that the discretionary powers which are necessarily vested in the Monarch, whether for the execution of the laws or for the nomination to magistracy and office, or for conducting the affairs of peace and war, or for ordering the revenue, should all be exercised upon public principles,\* and national grounds, and not on the likings or prejudices, the intrigues or policies of a Court.* He follows the plan and operations of the cabal to the most momentous effect, *if we admit it to have actually taken place*,—its influence on parliament. ‘The House of Commons was originally considered as a CONTROUL, *issuing immediately from the people, and SPEEDILY to be resolved into the mass* from whence it arose. In this respect, it was in the higher part of government what juries are in the lower. The capacity of a magistrate being transitory,

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\* Whatever might be the fact as to favouritism at that time, the constitutional and impartial reader will admit this *general* description to be just.

and that of a citizen permanent; the latter capacity, it was hoped, would, of course, preponderate in all discussions, not only between the people and the standing authority of the Crown, but between the people and the *fleeting* authority of the House of Commons itself. It was hoped, that, being of a middle nature between subject and government, they would feel with a more tender and nearer interest every thing that concerned the people, than the other remoter and more permanent parts of legislature. This character can never be sustained unless the House of Commons shall be made to bear some stamp of the actual disposition of the people at large. It would (among public misfortunes) be an evil more tolerable, that the House of Commons should be *infected with every epidemical phrensy of the people*, as this would indicate some consanguinity, some sympathy of nature, with their constituents, than that they should, in all cases, be untouched by the opinions and feelings of the people. *The virtue, spirit, and ESSENCE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS*

consist in its being the EXPRESS IMAGE OF THE FEELINGS OF THE NATION.\* It was not designed to be a controul upon, but for, the people.' Having given *this account of the intention of a House of Commons*, he proceeds to a description of its state at *that time*, which, whether just or not, is at least very eloquent. 'A vigilant and jealous eye over executory and judicial magistracy, an anxious care of public money, an openness, approaching towards facility, to public complaints: these seem to be the true characteristics of an House of Commons. But an addressing House of Commons, and a petitioning nation; an House of Commons full of confidence, when the nation is plunged in despair; in the utmost

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\* The ardour of Mr. Burke's mind transported him on this occasion farther than cool reason could justify. The virtue of the House of Commons, as of the other branches of the legislature, consists in promoting the interest and happiness of the nation, which, in many cases, is better attained by restraining its *feelings*, than by perfect sympathy with them, whatever may be their tendency. Legislative wisdom and benevolence seek the permanent welfare, not the temporary gratification of a people.

harmony with Ministers, whom the people regard with the utmost abhorrence; who vote thanks, when the public opinion calls upon them for impeachments; who are eager to grant, when the general voice demands account; who, in all disputes between the people and administration, presume against the people; who punish their disorders, but refuse even to enquire into the provocations to them: this is an unnatural, a monstrous state of things in this Constitution. Such an assembly may be a great, wise, awful senate; but it is not to any popular purpose an House of Commons.' He pursues the secret influence to its effects on foreign affairs, which he maintains also to be pernicious.

HIS REMEDY for the evil has not a *grain* of democracy in its composition. He does not propose an uncontrouled power of the people to prevent an uncontrouled power of the court. His object is to counterpoise the secret oligarchy of favouritism by an open aristocracy of talents, virtue, property, and



rank, combined together on avowed principles, agreeable to the Constitution, and supported by the approbation and confidence of the people. His plan is, that not popular favour alone shall determine who is to manage government, but popular favour combined with the constituents above mentioned. He thinks that the government should be in the hands of those at the same time most qualified and most interested in the welfare of the whole. These are men of talents, rank, property, and independence. He contends that an aristocracy so composed will, in all moral probability, promote the good of the country more effectually than either the people themselves, on the one hand, or court minions, on the other. In a word, he proposes that independent property should govern, and not dependent favouritism. The interests of the people, he conceives, should be placed in the hands of the independent yeomen, gentlemen, merchants, and manufacturers of the kingdom, whose situation, from either their fortune or industry, renders them free, independent

agents, than in the hands of the mere menials and ministers of court pageantry. He who derives his fortune from inheritance, or successful industry, has an interest in the welfare of the country in which that fortune is vested ; which is not the case with receivers of court wages. The Sovereign should be determined in the formation of his Ministry by that aristocracy so supported, and not by his own private predilections.

This general principle he applies to a *connection* which, he says, ought to possess Government. One of the chief arguments adduced by Burke in favour of governing the country by a *connection*, that is, a party of men not dependent on the Court, bound together by mutual confidence, common affections, and common interests, is, that it had been governed by such a *connection* during the most fortunate periods of the preceding reigns since the revolution. Here he brings forward a maxim often applied by him in the succeeding parts of his political

life:—that it behoves statesmen to reason from experience and example, and not from abstract principles. The connection by which he proposes the country to be governed is the Whig aristocracy, a combination of those families which had most powerfully supported the revolution and consequent establishments. Such a combination he supposes to be primarily essential to the well-being of the state. *Generally abhorrent of speculative innovation* in politics, he declares himself inimical to a change, or what its advocates call a reform in the constitution and duration of parliament.

Thus we see Burke has, from his political outset, been a FRIEND TO ARISTOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, AN ENEMY TO PARLIAMENTARY REFORM, AND TO METAPHYSICAL INNOVATION IN POLITICS.

It may be said that, although the country had prospered when government was in the hands of the *Whig connection*, it would not follow, that it was the CONNECTION that pro-

duced that prosperity. It may also be said, that the country, in fact, had not prospered to the extent which Burke assumes. It would be difficult to prove that the Duke of Marlborough's victories (had they been as useful as they were brilliant) proceeded from his connection with the Whig party. To many it will be doubtful, whether the proceedings of the Whig connections, after their re-establishment in power by the accession, were not guilty of as oppressive and impolitic acts as any attributed to the Court junto, when Burke wrote. Many may think the proceedings against the Tory Lords, by the Whigs, as unjustifiable and unconstitutional as those against the popular favourites at the supposed instigation of the Court junto, and conceive the prosecution of Lord Oxford and of Atterbury to have been at least as contrary to natural justice and to constitutional principle as the prosecution of Wilkes. The purity of the *longest of all Whig Administrations* has been questioned on fully as strong grounds as the purity of any Ministry formed at the in-

stance of the Court junto. Corruption appears from history to have prevailed as much under the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, as under those of Bute, Grenville, or Grafton. The Whig Ministers, during the first war of George II. did not contribute very much either to national honour or advantage. The most able and successful Minister England had known was not a creature of the Whig aristocracy, but a statesman recommended to HIS SOVEREIGN'S CHOICE BY HIS PERSONAL ABILITIES AND THE FAVOUR OF THE PEOPLE. He was even obnoxious to some Whigs of the highest *rank*, but overbore them by the highest *TALENTS*. Following, therefore, with Burke, experience, as the surest guide in the conduct of affairs, we do not find the Whig combination, which he proposes, most likely to extricate the country from the alledged evil. A Whig junto might be better than a Court junto. Independent Whigs would probably be better disposed to promote the interest of their country, than dependent Courtiers ;— *but all Whigs are not independent.* The inde-

pendence of many of the members of the *connection* was by no means clear. Whig great men had *retainers*, as well as Court great men. Where evil of any great kind, and in a great degree, prevails, the remedy does not lie in any particular junto, but in the UNITED SENSE AND VIRTUE OF THE COMMUNITY.

I am aware, that it has been the received doctrine among Whig parties ever since the revolution, that public affairs ought to be managed by a certain party, which its members called the Whig connection. In the reign of Queen Anne, the Whigs, from the accession of the Duke of Marlborough to their measures, and the great abilities of many other characters belonging to them, constituted a most powerful and efficient Administration; under whom, and their leader, the most splendid exploits were performed; and most glorious victories were obtained. The achievements arising from the genius of individual Whigs, acting in concert, reflected a lustre on the whole party,

increased the number of their adherents, and added weight to an opinion before prevalent, that the Whig party, as the most strenuous supporters of the revolution, should continue to hold the reins of a government formed on the principles which had produced that great event. Those, it was alledged, who had promoted the establishment of the glorious William, the deliverer of Britain, and had so effectually humbled France, the enemy of this and every free country, ought always to preside at the helm of affairs. Mr. Harley, ✓ who, at one stage of his political career professed himself of no party, held as a favourite maxim, that the name of party ought to be abolished, by SELECTING FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE, INDISCRIMINATELY, THE WISEST AND MOST VIRTUOUS, *whatever their political denominations or connections might be.* Dr. Somerville, a respectable historian, observes, that this was a ‘ maxim, which, though founded on specious arguments, can only be construed as a doubtful test of the liberality and independence of the person

who holds it, as it may be made subservient to private ambition, as often as to general utility.' He afterwards shews, what was indeed very obvious, that Harley himself was far from being guided by this maxim. In calling it a doubtful test, the learned writer does not carefully distinguish between the truth and falsehood, utility and hurtfulness, of a principle in itself, and the sincerity and wisdom of those who may profess to adopt it. The goodness or badness of this political doctrine must be estimated by the tendency of the qualities, in which it would vest government, to produce public happiness. The question, therefore, is simply this, × Whether the admission of either Whig or Tory doctrines, or the possession and exertion of wisdom and virtue, most completely fits either a man, or set of men, for managing difficult and complicated concerns, and promoting the welfare of society. The Tories, indeed, in the reign of Queen Anne, were a much less closely compacted band than the Whigs. Consciousness of their own strength and union, perhaps, might be



one reason which induced the Whigs to propose governing by their own junto, instead of joining with other parties in forming an Administration on a more extended plan.\* During the reigns of the two first Georges, the Whig phalanx actually did govern by their own combination, in every Ministry but one, in which consummate genius, supported by the confidence of the nation, overbore the intrigues of party juntos. Mr. Pitt, though more favourable to Whig principles, grounded on reasoning and discussion, than to Tory notions, resting their weight upon authority, could not be said to belong to the Whig combination; at the head of which was the Duke of Newcastle, who was also a member of that Administration. The Whig connection, in fact, considered themselves as a company in whom was vested a right to a monopoly in government; and repined that Mr. Pitt's abilities

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\* This Mr. Harley strenuously endeavoured to, promote, after the dismissal of the Whig civil officers, and before the Duke of Marlborough was deprived of the command.

*See Somerville's History.*

made him Minister without being their creature, and frequently attempted to thwart his councils, but were borne down by the force of his reasoning. At the beginning of the present reign it was evident that his Majesty had formed a more liberal and comprehensive plan of government, than those which his two predecessors, led in a great degree by the circumstances of the times, had embraced. While the Stuart family cherished hopes of making good their pretensions to the throne, it was natural for the King, supported on principles inimical to Jacobitism, to repose the chief confidence in those whose political sentiments were most diametrically opposite to the doctrines of the Pretender's friends. But the hopes of the Chevalier being entirely crushed, it was time that general ability and character should resume their superiority over particular notions; and that the question should no longer be in the choice of a Minister, is, or is he not, a Whig or a Tory, but is he qualified and disposed to promote the public good? This was a doctrine by no means

favourable to the views of the Whig connection ; as those, who, by fortunate accidents have been enabled to possess a monopoly in a beneficial commerce, will by no means be the readiest to testify their approbation when the trade is thrown open to enterprize, skill, and ability. His Majesty's plan was to chuse his Ministers according to his opinion of their fitness for their offices, and not in obedience to the dictation of a junto.

The wisest and best plans are not always executed in proportion to their wisdom and utility. It often requires variety of experiment before the properest modes of operation and agents of execution can be discovered. The difficulty of selecting the most apposite means, and especially an unfortunate misunderstanding between the Ministers chosen by his Majesty and the illustrious personage whom we have above mentioned, the opposition of the Whig connection long prevented the thorough completion of the expanded scheme. Had Mr.

Pitt continued at the head of affairs, there is no doubt that his powers might have, at a much earlier period of this reign, overwhelmed any faction associated on the principle of governing by a junto ; but circumstanced as things were, the perfect establishment of the principle that government should be carried on by the ablest, wisest, and most patriotically disposed men, whether Whigs or Tories, was reserved for William Pitt the younger.

To oppose this comprehensive scheme of policy, and to restore to themselves the monopoly of government, was the great object of the Whig junto ; to facilitate the attainment of their purpose, they contended, that there was a junto of court favourites who had acquired that direction of affairs which they themselves sought, had for a certain time attained, even in the present reign, and had lost through their own inefficiency. Mr. Burke, in his ' Thoughts on the Dis- contents,' is the advocate of the Whig combination ; but though no one was more

thoroughly acquainted with government in general, with the history and government of this country in particular, yet he does not prove that the perfection of a polity consists in being directed by such a combination as he proposes, nor that when the connection in question held the chief offices of state, it manifested such qualifications as to render its return to office desirable by the country.

Burke thought the Whig connection more powerful opposers of the Court project, than the personal talents and popularity of individuals. His reasoning is directed to recommend the Rockingham party to have the management of affairs, rather than Lord Chatham. Although endued with talents that needed no patronage to render him great, Burke had been brought forward by the Whig interest; and endeavours to shew that the wisest policy was to entrust government to those with whom he himself was connected. He tries to conciliate the King to that party, by intimating, that by

it the means of royal magnificence would be much more amply supplied than by the Court-junto. 'Suppose,' he says, 'we were to ask, whether the King has been richer since the establishment of court favouritism, I believe it will be found, that the picture of royal indigence, which our Court has presented, has been truly humiliating. If the royal treasury *had been exhausted by splendour and magnificence, his distress would have been accounted for, and in some measure justified.*'

He contends less for change of measures than change of men. Indeed he proposes no material change of measures.

A much less degree of political knowledge and ability than he possessed would, if impartially exerted, have seen, that such a government as he proposes would be hereafter ineffectual, as it had hitherto been; but so ductile was the fancy, so ardent were the passions of Burke, that he often deviated from reason much farther than men of very inferior talents, with cooler imaginations and

temper. Whatever side he embraced, he embraced eagerly. When his affections were once engaged, whatever they stimulated he frequently conceived to be true and right. It is evidently not peculiar to Burke that his passions often warped his reason; but an attentive observer of his life must see that effect produced in him in so great a degree, as to form a peculiar characteristic of his mind. His genius is often employed in inventing arguments for propositions not true, or devising means for ends not salutary:—in counteracting wisdom.

In many of Burke's writings we meet rather with an abundance of important facts, profound observations, brilliant images, and able arguments, adding to the general amusement, pleasure, information, and instruction, than with a *chain of proofs*, tending to confirm a specific proposition. In this pamphlet, the evident object is to evince the necessity of calling Lord Rockingham's party into power. Excellent as it is in many parts, it does not evince the necessity,

or even the expediency, of that change. Some of his premises tend to establish conclusions contrary to those which he has deduced. While he has drawn a most glowing picture of the corruption of the House of Commons, he is inimical to parliamentary reform. If the House of Commons was so perverted from its original purpose, as to become a mere engine of the Court, a reform would not only be expedient but necessary. A mere dissolution of that parliament would not be sufficient, as the corruption did not arise from causes peculiar to that parliament. If secret influence existed, and existed with the alarming and destructive corruption of the House of Commons, which he states, a *radical* change was necessary. It must be admitted by the friends of Burke, that though he declares himself an enemy to parliamentary reform, his statement of the corruption would, if true, be as strong an argument in favour of reform as its supporters could adduce. Either the disease was not so virulent as he represented, or the remedy which he proposed was inadequate to the



cure. *Mere change of physicians* could not expel distemper, without a change of either regimen or medicine. This treatise tends rather to recommend the members of his own college to employment than to restore the patient to health.

In perusing this, or any of the works of Burke, on the *politics of the time*, the astonishing abilities and knowledge employed lead a reader to regret that they were not directed either to more permanent objects, or to objects, to the attainment of which they might have been more effectual. Though in point of genius and learning even Johnson or Hume were not superior to him, the direction of both these men's powers to objects of more permanent importance has rendered their efforts of greater advantage to mankind than Burke's. The effect of exertions so directed as their's depended on their intrinsic ability and skill; the effect of Burke's, in a great degree, on extrinsic circumstances. He might reason, he might write, he might speak; but unless

he coincided with the notions and views of Government, his reasoning, literature, and oratory, could not effectuate *his purposes*. There was no subject of moral or political history, or science, of which he was not master. Had he devoted those powers and exertions to the illustration of the ‘ noblest study of mankind,’—of man, in his faculties, in his social and civil relations,—which he applied to the *propagation of party creeds*, his utility to society must have been much greater than it was at *that* time. The accession of delight and instruction, from the labours of Burke, investigating and elucidating general truths, must have been much more important than from his labours in supporting particular notions.

‘ To party he gave what was meant for mankind.’

The brilliant eloquence and ingenious reasoning of this work produced a powerful effect on the public mind ; though, perhaps, its influence was considerably less than that of Junius in rendering the Grafton Administration unpopular. Burke may be rather

said, on this occasion, to have co-operated with that anonymous assailant, than Junius to have co-operated with Burke. If, however, Burke's 'Thoughts on the Discontents' may have contributed to the change of Ministry, it did not serve to introduce any of the members of the Whig connection which he with such powers of genius recommended.

Two sets of writers attacked this pamphlet:—the friends of the Court, who denied the existence of the secret cabinet; and the republicans, who inveighed against its aristocratical tendency and opposition to reform. The celebrated Mrs. Macaulay answered this tract, and descanted with much speculative ingenuity on the just ends of government, 'the Usurpations of Establishments,' 'the Rights of Man,' 'complete Reform in Parliament and Government,' 'Political Justice,' and many other topics that have since been hackneyed in democratical writings, from the bold, energetic, acute, dangerous sophistry of Paine,

and the ingenious, but impracticable, theories of Godwin, to the ignorant declamation of Thelwall. The aristocratic Burke of those days was assailed, by the republicans of that period, with as much violence as the aristocratic Burke of latter times by the republicans of this period. The author of a Biographical Préface to Burke's Posthumous Works asserts that the *Thoughts on the Discontents* mark the political tenets of Burke to have been congenial to those recently attacked by democratic writers. To me some of the opinions appear coincident, some opposite. That government ought to be in the hands of an aristocracy of rank and property is consistent with his late doctrines. The importance ascribed by him to the voice of the people, his encouragement of their petitions, his opinion that the House of Commons ought to be an image of popular opinion and an organ of popular will, may be apparently, but is not really inconsistent, as, I trust, will be found when these come to be discussed, with his doctrines brought forward on the French revolution.

This was the first subject on which Burke and Johnson published opposite opinions. The *ALARM*, which Johnson calls *false*, and the *Discontents*, which Burke supposes well founded, were nearly the same. On considering these performances, not as consisting of true or false reasoning, but as indicative of knowledge and talents, it must appear to an impartial reader, that though Johnson displays equal acuteness, equal strength, and more poignancy, Burke shews much more of expansion and of profound investigation; and that from his treatise a much greater accession of political knowledge and principle may be derived than from Johnson's. It may be said that attack is more expatiatory than defence; but Johnson, in his *False Alarm*, attacks as well as defends. His subject admitted of great expansion: he might have taken as wide a range through the effects of *popular licentiousness* as Burke did through those of *court favouritism*. In fact, with a memory as retentive, with a judgment as strong and discriminating as Burke's, equal to any man

in his writings on general ethics and criticism, he did not so much excel in political discussion.

While Burke and Johnson differed on subjects of political expediency, they co-operated in performing the duties of private friendship and justice. They this summer appeared together at the Old Bailey, to give evidence to the character of a gentleman tried for his life. Mr. Barette, so well known in the literary world, had been attacked by a woman of the town, near the Haymarket. In endeavouring to get away, he was surrounded by three fellows, who supported the woman in her impudence, and, with much scurrilous abuse, struck him. They continued to molest him ; on which, apprehensive of his life, he drew a knife, warning them to keep off: a scuffle ensuing, he stabbed two of them, of whom one died. Burke and Johnson, with several others, bore testimony to the goodness of his general character and the peaceableness of his disposition. The jury considered the homicide

as in self-defence, and he was accordingly acquitted. Barette was very intimate with the members of the literary club, especially with Burke and Johnson, and highly valued by those illustrious personages.

Mr. Burke about this time paid a visit to Ireland, and was received with the kindest affection by his friends in that hospitable country. As his character for genius, literature, and parliamentary eloquence, was now very high, he found many claimed kindred with him, of whom he had never before heard; and that many pretended to have long foreseen his eminence, whose penetration was of that sort that enabled them to discover a character to be great, when universally affirmed to be so; and whose estimates of genius and virtue depended in a considerable degree on the newspapers which they happened most frequently to read. Justly appreciating such sagacity and claims of relation, he behaved with the greatest affability and benevolence to all the intimates of his youth. His

master, Mr. Shackleton, whom I have before mentioned, had a distinguished share of his attention. With his old school-fellows he indulged himself in retracing the scenes of his juvenile days, and frequently corresponded with them. One of his greatest intimates, and with whom he spent much of his time whenever he went to Ireland, was Mr. Michael Smith, who had been his class-fellow under Mr. Shackleton, and was now a country schoolmaster, but always valued by the great mind of Burke, according to his abilities and personal character, and not according to his accidental situation. He at this time was master of the Grammar-school of Fenagh, in the county of Leitrim. Letters frequently passed between them, one of which, on each side, I shall select as a specimen of the respectable ability of Mr. Smith, and the estimation in which he was held by his illustrious correspondent. They were written at a much earlier period of Burke's life than that at which we are now arrived; but could not before be introduced with propriety, as an opportunity had not



occurred of mentioning Mr. Smith. It appears, that soon after his arrival in London, Mr. Burke had received a letter from Mr. Smith, to which the following is the answer :

‘ MY DEAR MICHAEL,

‘ Mr. Balf was so very kind as to deliver me your friendly epistle about half an hour ago. I read it over, blest the first inventor of letters, and as I have plenty of ink, pens, and paper, and as this is one of my holidays, I intend to dedicate it to friendship.— Balzac having once escaped from a company, where he found it necessary to weigh every word that he uttered, chanced to meet a friend : “ Come,” said he to him, “ let us retire to some place where we can converse freely together, and commit as many solecisms as we please.” ‘ I need not tell you the application. You’ll expect some short account of my journey to this great city. To tell you the truth, I made very few remarks as I rolled along, for my mind was occupied

with many thoughts, and my eyes often filled with tears, when I reflected on all the dear friends I left behind; yet the prospects could not fail to attract the attention of the most indifferent: country seats sprinkled round on every side, some in the modern taste, others in the stile of old de Coverley Hall, all smiling on the neat, but humble cottage; every village as gay and compact as a bee-hive, resounding with the busy hum of industry, and inns like palaces. What a contrast between our poor country, where you'll scarce find a cottage ornamented with a chimney! But what pleased me most of all was the progress of agriculture, my favourite study, and my favourite pursuit, if Providence had blessed me with a few paternal acres. A description of London and its nations would fill a volume. The buildings are very fine: it may be called the sink of vice: but her hospitals and charitable institutions, whose turrets pierce the skies, like so many electrical conductors, avert the very wrath of Heaven. The inhabitants may be divided into two classes,

the *undoers* and the *undone*, generally so, I say, for I am persuaded there are many men of honesty and women of virtue in every street. An Englishman is cold and distant at first ; he is very cautious even in forming an acquaintance, he must know you well before he enters into friendship with you ; but if he does, he is not the first to dissolve that sacred band ; in short, a real Englishman is one that performs more than he promises ; in company he is rather silent, extremely prudent in his expressions, even in politics, his favourite topic. The women are not quite so reserved ; they consult their glasses to the greatest advantage, and as Nature is very liberal in her gifts to their persons, and even mind, it is not easy for a young man to escape their glances, or to shut his ears to their softly flowing accents. As to the state of learning in this city, you know I have not been long enough in it to form a proper judgment of that subject. I don't think, however, there is as much respect paid to a man of letters on this side the water as you imagine. I don't find that

genius, the "rath primrose, which, forsaken, dies," is patronized by any of the nobility, so that writers of the first talents are left to the capricious patronage of the public. Notwithstanding this discouragement, literature is cultivated in a high degree. Poetry raises her enchanting voice to Heaven. History arrests the wings of Time in his flight to the gulph of oblivion. Philosophy, the queen of Arts, and the daughter of Heaven, is daily extending her intellectual empire. Fancy sports on airy wing like a meteor on the bosom of a summer cloud, and even Metaphysics spins her cobwebs, and catches some flies. The House of Commons not unfrequently exhibits explosions of eloquence that rise superior to those of Greece and Rome, even in their proudest days. Yet after all a man will make more by the figures of arithmetic than by the figures of rhetoric, unless he can get into the trade wind, and then he may sail secure over Pactolean sands. As to the stage, it is sunk, in my opinion, into the lowest degree; I mean with regard to the trash

that is exhibited on it ; but I don't attribute this to the taste of the audience, for when Shakspeare warbles his " native wood notes," the boxes, pit, and gallery, are crowded—and the Gods are true to every word, if properly winged to the heart.

Soon after my arrival in town, I visited Westminster Abbey ; the moment I entered I felt a kind of awe pervade my mind, which I cannot describe ; the very silence seemed sacred. Henry the Seventh's chapel is a very fine piece of Gothic architecture, particularly the roof ; but I am told that it is exceeded by a chapel in the University of Cambridge. Mrs. Nightingale's monument has not been praised beyond its merit. The attitude and expression of the husband, in endeavouring to shield his wife from the dart of death, is natural and affecting. But I always thought that the image of death would be much better represented with an extinguished torch, inverted, than with a dart. Some would imagine that all these monuments were so many monuments of

folly—I don't think so ; what useful lessons of morality and sound philosophy do they not exhibit ! When the high-born beauty surveys her face in the polished parian, though dumb the marble, yet it tells her that it was placed to guard the remains of as fine a form and as fair a face as her own. They shew besides how anxious we are to extend our loves and friendship beyond the grave, and to snatch as much as we can from oblivion—such is our natural love of immortality ; but it is here that letters obtain the noblest triumphs ; it is here that the swarthy daughters of Cadmus may hang their trophies on high, for when all the pride of the chissel and the pomp of heraldry yield to the silent touches of Time, a single line, a half worn-out inscription, remain faithful to their trust. Blest be the man that first introduced these strangers into our islands, and may they never want protection or merit ! I have not the least doubt, that the finest poem in the English language, I mean Milton's *Il Penseroso*, was composed in the long resounding isle of a mouldering

cloister or ivy'd abbey. Yet after all, do you know that I would rather sleep in the southern corner of a little country churchyard, than in the tomb of the Capulets. I should like, however, that my dust should mingle with kindred dust. The good old expression, "Family burying-ground," has something pleasing in it, at least to me. I am glad that Dr. Sheridan is returned, and determined to spend the rest of his days in your quarter. I should send him some Botanic writings, which I have in view, if I were not certain that the Irish Hippocrates would rather read nature in her own works. With what pleasure I have seen him trace the delicate texture of a lily, and exclaim with the God in humanity, that "Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of those;" and you know that our lilies are fairer than new fallen snow. I am extremely sorry that any dispute should arise betwixt you and your brother-in-law; he is, I know, a little hot-headed, especially when he takes a glass, and I am afraid he leans a little too much to the social can. Mr. Peyton, however, is a

peace-maker, and I am sure, if the whole was laid before him, that he would settle it to your satisfaction, and the sooner the better. You are quite mistaken when you think I don't admire Plutarch, I prefer his writings to those of any other.—*Sacra semper excipio, quæ in summa arce locare fas est & æquum nunquam non in manibus habenda.*

‘ Mr. Balfe sets outs for Germany in the spring, on a visit to his uncle, who is now in Vienna. The General is very rich, and advancing in years, so that it is probable when he is called to repose on his laurels, that his nephew will be his heir, and I need not tell you that he is worthy of it. I expect, in a day or two, to be introduced to Miss Woffington, our countrywoman. She is rapidly rising into theatric fame; I could wish to publish a few anecdotes of her. She is of low origin, it is true, but talents and nature often avenge themselves on fortune in this respect. The roses of Florida spring out of the finest soil, they are the fairest in the universe, but they emit no fragrance.



I recollect that she read her recantation in a little country church, somewhere in the county of Cavan. Mr. Fleming of Stahalmuck wrote some verses on that occasion. I wish you could procure a copy of them for me as soon as possible. I also wish that you could procure some anecdotes of Mr. Brooke, author of the justly celebrated tragedy of *Gustavus Vasa*.

The remainder of this letter touches on some of Mr. Smith's family affairs, which would not be proper to publish.

That the reader may judge of the epistolary style of Mr. Burke's correspondent, it may not be unacceptable to insert the answer:

' MY GOOD SIR,

' I once read of a King of Spain, Alphon-  
sus, I think, who was cured of a dangerous  
disease by reading a passage in Livy. Your  
kind letter had much the same effect on me,  
for my spirits were so low the moment I

received it, that it is not in the power of words to describe my situation ; but scarce had I read six lines, when my heart began to emerge, and the sun shone as bright as ever ; and if you pity a poor dealer in Syntax, buried alive, I may say, write to me as often as you can. My school is on the increase, it is true, but the people are so poor that they cannot pay. I have thirteen Latin scholars, at a crown a quarter, and six and twenty in writing and figures. I have taken a little farm of about five acres. So that betwixt the cultivation of my fields, and that of the tender mind, I have very little time on my hands, or my feet, I may say, for sometimes I mingle in the dance. As to Greek, there is no attention paid to it in this quarter. Last week I endeavoured to prevail on Mr. Johnson to permit me to give his nephew a few lessons in the language of Heaven. He said he had no objection, if I could assure him that it would enable Jack to buy a cow or a horse to more advantage. Having cast his eye on a Greek book, which I had in my hand, " What," said he, " would

you have my nephew spend his time in learning these pot-hooks and hangers?" Thus you see how learning is prized in this part of the world; and from your own account, I don't find that the Muses are held in such high estimation in England, which I was early taught to consider as the seat of arms and arts. What, then, ~~is~~ to become of their votaries?—neglected, ~~and~~ despised!—You'll forgive me, I feel myself so uneasy and depressed as often as I think on this matter, that I cannot help dropping a tear on my books—the only source and companions of my solitary hours, so that you see we have little cause to boast of the triumph of letters over the breathing marble, or the proudest trophies of war. Yet I join with you in blessing the memory of the man that first introduced the swarthy daughter of Cadmus into these islands. I think I can recollect some lines on this subject in the form of an ænigma, which, perhaps, you have not seen:

*"Bis venerē novem juvenes ad mœnia nostra*

*Ex aliis, huc ad nos rediere, locis:*

*Conspicui forma, pariles florentibus annis,  
Attamen bis minime par decor oris adest.  
Nil est egregiæ quod dicas de esse cohorti,  
Quam quod non potis est edere lingua  
Non illis vox est, sed secum quemque godales sonos.  
Ducunt, ex bis, ut verba loquantur, habent;  
Submoto nullum dicunt interprete verbum,  
Orbe sed est toto gloria magna verum."*

‘ Whilst I am on this interesting subject, I  
must not forget to mention an old Irish bard,  
who could conduct those nymphs through  
all the mystic mazes of poetic dance, re-  
signed his tuneful breath last week. I ac-  
companied his remains to the grave. He  
has left me all his manuscripts, and I shall  
select some of the finest passages of them  
for you, and translate them for you as well  
as I can.’

‘ My school-house was levelled with the  
ground last week in a storm:—Boreas, of  
true Russian descent, pays very little respect  
to learning. The neighbours, however, as-  
sembled the next day, and raised me a new  
one, on a more pleasing scite; so that my  
bare-footed pupils are quite happy, as it is

better wooded, and of course will afford them an opportunity of playing hound and hare with more art. O'Gara has made me a present of a dial, which I intend to erect in the spring. Oh the wit of man, that can even turn a shadow into use, and teach it to point out the fleeting hours, as unsubstantial as itself! But, *Paullo majora Canamus*. I once read in an old Irish poem, that when Jupiter made man, he gave him his choice either of wings or imagination; he accepted the latter, which shews that our first fabulous father had some brains. Let me rise on this divine plume then, and for once cast a glance into futurity. What do I see? Why I see my worthy friend, arrayed in a flowing robe; I hear his voice raised in the cause of innocence and distress; the widow and the orphan bless his name, and the wily villain hunted down through all the mazes of law. Once more Astrea revisits the earth; I see him raised to the seat of judgment, his ermine as pure as his native snow; the golden scales even balanced in his hands, and the sword of justice tempered in the

tears of mercy. The ascent to this eminence is difficult, but

*"Interpone tuis interdum gaudia curis."*

' I know you will be glad to hear that Tom and I are on good terms.—You are right, he drinks whiskey as often as he can get it —*Ore rotundo*, and sometimes

*" Warm from the still, and faithful to its fires,"*

too, which is worst of all. Your account of London, I believe, is very just. All great cities, from Rome down, are the sinks of vice and the graves of genius. I admire the idea of your public charities. One of the three impossibilities amongst the ancients was *Eripere Jovi fulmen*, and amongst the Christians *Eripere Deo fulmen iræ*, but *Charity* is the emanation of Heaven!

' As to Miss Woffington, I can collect very little of her. She was born in Dublin, read her recantation in the parish church of Lurgan near Virginy, in the county of

Cavan, before the Reverend Mr. Sterling, who was a great musician. Mr. Fleming did write some verses on that occasion, but it is not easy to procure them, for you know he's a great man—a Justice of Peace, and one of the Grand Jury. They began thus, I think:—

“ And now the Sun, revolving to the west,  
Bequeath'd the weary'd hemisphere to rest;  
And now the Moon, in milder glories dight,  
Resum'd the peaceful empire of the night.”

‘ I can recollect no more, and I don't know that these are correct. There is an anecdote told of her, and I believe there is very little doubt of the truth of it.

‘ Mr. ——— having spent some time in Paris, soon after his return happened to dine at Mr. Gore's, where Miss Woffington captivated the company with her sprightly wit and easy manners; our Parisian hero paid such attention to the glass, that the cloth was scarce removed when the table and chairs exhibited the effects of it, as well as

those that were present, particularly Miss Woffington, who, as she happened to be formed of the common mould, was reminded of it, to which she only answered, " Sir, I expected all this ; I observed for some time past the yellow clay breaking through the plaister of Paris."

' As to Mr. Brooke, I believe I can collect you many particulars relative to him. His father was a clergyman of the Church of England. He is married to a Miss Mears, a relation of his own. He has lately built a house at Longfield, one of the most desert spots in the county of Meath. He is an enthusiast in agriculture, and has spent his patrimony in draining lakes, to very little advantage. He has had many children ; but Heaven was so indulgent as to call them out of this life just as they began to taste the miseries of it.

' Doctor Sheridan is well, and desires to be remembered to you. I hope that you will write as often as you can. You can't con-



ceive what pleasure it will afford me to correspond with you.'

I am, &c.

M. SMITH.

The internal commotions were beginning, in some degree, to subside ; but proceedings arising from them still occupied the public attention. Affairs in America were growing more and more gloomy.

Lord North was now Prime Minister ; a man of pleasing and engaging manners, agreeable disposition, and most amiable private character. Distinguished for wit and readiness of argument, for classical knowledge, for taste and for elegant literature ; but perhaps fitter for the enjoyment and participation of enlightened discourse in private societies, than for the conduct of affairs at so difficult a juncture.

His talents, indeed, were probably sufficient for his situation. Extraordinary abilities are not so absolutely necessary in

the administration of government, as attention, experience, prudence, and vigour. These qualities, with sound judgment, may fit the possessor for the highest offices ; whereas, without them, the greatest genius is insufficient. The goodness and wisdom of Providence, intending human happiness, puts the means, in a great measure, within our reach : the efficacy of conduct of every sort does not depend so much on *force of understanding*, which is not in our power, as on the conformation of WILL, which is in our power. In eloquence, Lord North had few superiors in the house ; but his political notions were wavering and unsettled. His counsels were fluctuating, being generally the result of particular occasion, and not the efforts of a great, consistent, and well concerted plan. His conduct was unsteady, now feeble, now rash, now conceding, now coercing : with considerable talents, and many virtues, he was the cause of great disasters. His most formidable opponent in the House of Commons, and by far the greatest orator it contained, was Burke.

On subjects of deliberative wisdom, on subjects addressing themselves not to his prejudices and passions as a party man, but to his knowledge and understanding as a senator, Burke's views were grand and comprehensive. He considered the question with all its relations, profoundly investigated cause, and deduced consequences. The speeches of this illustrious orator were eminent for exactness, extent, and multiplicity of information; for copiousness and brilliancy of imagery; for readiness, acuteness, versatility, and strength of argument; for wideness of range, and profound reflection; for command of language and facility of communication. Johnson observes, that genius does not consist in the preponderancy of any one of the intellectual faculties, but in the excellence of all. On viewing the whole mental exertions of Burke, one would not have the hardihood to decide whether memory, imagination, or reason, was the most conspicuous; but most men, on attending to the operations of any one of the powers, would esteem it superior to

the others. From the most minute and technical details, to the most enlarged philosophy, physical and moral, and its application to practice, he was always completely master of the subject. In speaking on the changes of a turnpike road, or on the revolutions of nations ; in explaining the process of a manufacture, or the progress of the human mind, he never failed to shew that the whole and every part, the ends and means, the relation of means to means, and of means to ends, were all within his grasp. When exhibition of man was requisite, either of the individual or species, either as modified by particular professions, arts, circumstances, or situation, or in a general society, he drew a just, discriminate, strong, and striking picture. Often, indeed, the fulness of his mind and the elasticity of his fancy would lead him farther than was necessary, for information or argument, on the mere subject of discussion. But if some of his thoughts, images, or sentiments, might be irrelative to the individual object proposed, they did not fail to produce some purpose

of general pleasure or utility. If he did *digress*, you might be instructed, and must be delighted; and you were sure soon to return to the matter in discussion: as at his own Beaconsfield, you might deviate to survey woods and lawns, and luxuriant meadows and rich corn-fields, but you could soon regain the straight road; a road leading to the reservoir of learning and sound philosophy. The rapidity of Burke's associating principle often brought together subjects slightly related. The fulness and flow of his capacious mind rendered his speeches very long, and to some very tiresome. To follow his details, relish his imagery, and grasp his reasoning, often required an extent of knowledge, a vigour of fancy, and a compass of intellect not granted to ordinary men. Besides, there are seasons, when even the wisest men may be weary of wisdom. He frequently, after the night was far advanced, began a speech which he carried on for three hours:—

‘ Too deep for his hearers, he went on refining,  
And though of convincing, while they thought of dining.’

In conversation, Burke excelled as much as in public speaking. He could accommodate his discourse to the capacities, and habits, and knowledge of the person addressed. He could convey information either to the simple or the refined ; and instruction either to the clown or the sage. Dr. Johnson, while he declares his opinion, that if Burke were to go into a barn, the threshers would think him the wisest man they ever saw, testifies that he himself never was in Burke's company without departing the wiser. That sage, who considered conversation as a competition of intellectual powers, declared he was never stimulated to such exertion as when contending with Burke. Once, when he was ill, and unable to exert himself as much as usual, without fatigue, Burke being mentioned, he said, ' Edmund calls forth all my powers ; were I to see him now it would kill me.' It is to be observed, that the effects of Burke's conversation arose entirely from, its *intrinsic excellence*. There was no extrinsic aid, *no pomposity of manner*, to add apparent to real force. There was

no *bow-wow* way to make ordinary observer's fancy that it contained more strength than it did. Pungency often adds to the appearance of force : Burke could be pointed, but was not so habitually. His conversation, like his speeches, was an unaffected effusion of knowledge, imagery, sentiment, reasoning, philosophy. The susceptibility of his mind made his passions very easily moved. His irritability did not, however, show itself often in private conversation. Even in the contention of public debate, when his heat hurried him into expressions of which calm judgment could not approve, his asperity was either the occasional retort of irritation, or the moral reproof of real or fancied delinquency, not the planned attack of deliberate malice.

Lord North, in order to tranquillize America, proposed, in the beginning of his administration, to repeal the obnoxious laws of the former Ministry, and to reserve the duty on tea, merely to maintain the authority of Parliament. The duty was in

itself of no great importance, but in its principle and consequences of the highest moment. The mercantile interest had suffered by the associations of the Americans not to take the article taxed. Lord North's was a short-sighted expedient, intended to remove a particular inconvenience; but not a wise plan of general conciliation, by removing the causes of the discontents. As the Americans denied the parliamentary right of taxing them, the discontinuance of several duties did not tend to remove their dissatisfaction, while the smallest remained. The three-pence a pound on tea was equally inconsistent with the opinion of the Americans on taxation, as a high duty on that and every other article would have been. Lord North's measure was impolitic in two views: if the object was reconciliation, all the duties ought to have been taken off; if maintenance of the rights of Parliament, it was a diminution of revenue to no purpose. It was a *half measure*, and, as half measures usually are, was ultimately ineffectual. Burke's speech on this proposition contained



the most brilliant wit and sarcastic humour, with the most extensive knowledge and forcible reasoning. Lord North's scheme was, he said, a heterogeneous mixture of concession and coercion ; of concession not tending to conciliate, and of coercion that could not be carried into execution ; at once exciting hatred for the intention, and contempt for the weakness. ' Thus, the malignity of your will is abhorred, and the debility of your power is contemned ; and Parliament, which you persuade to sanction your follies, is exposed to dishonour.'

As his great genius was more and more matured by experience, he became, in estimating plans for the conduct of affairs, less and less attentive to questions of abstraction. At the commencement of his political life, he advised a declaration of right, while he was for renouncing its beneficial exercise. His wisdom was now of too enlarged a nature, and, too practical an operation, to dwell on barren generalities and metaphysical distinctions. Although no man could

more easily and more perfectly generalize, yet, in matters of counsel and action, he, in applying a general rule, always took into consideration the case with its causes, peculiar circumstances, and probable consequences, as to be expected from an appeal to experience. To use his own language, he regarded abstract competency as subservient to moral competency. Whatever had been found productive on the whole of good effects, he recommended to be done; of bad, to be avoided.. In going over Lord North's proposition, he did not so much consider the question of right as of expediency. A maxim of his, remarked by the penetrating Editor of the Posthumous Works, that to INNOVATE is not to REFORM, was applied to this measure. The Americans, he said, have been very serviceable to Britain under the old system; do not, therefore, let us rashly seek a new. Our commercial interests have been hitherto very greatly promoted by our friendly intercourse with the colonies; do not let us endanger possession for contingency, DO NOT LET US SUBSTITUTE UN-

**TRIED THEORIES FOR A SYSTEM EXPERI-  
MENTALLY ASCERTAINED TO BE USEFUL.**

The changes from metaphysical disquisition to practical consideration is not peculiar to Burke; it is a common progression in wise minds, instructed in philosophy, as they become more experienced by increase of years, converse with mankind, and habituation to the business of life.

Lord North's object seems to have been too much to please both parties; to gratify the supporters of parliamentary supremacy, and to restore satisfaction to the colonies. Either a more thorough knowledge of the state and sentiments of the Americans, the capacity of drawing just conclusions from what he knew, or determined resolution to act according to his own information and reasoning, were wanting to Lord North. Many, knowing his abilities, have concluded the latter to be the case; and have thought his measures respecting America the dictates of less able but more powerful courtiers.

Whatever was the cause, the effect was most unfortunate to these realms.

Proceedings relative to the freedom of the press afforded much discussion in the House of Commons. The debates turning on constitutional points, Burke took a very distinguished part. Among many printers who republished Junius's Letters from the original, in the Public Advertiser, one was Almon ; a man obnoxious to Government on account of personal attacks upon some of the Ministry, and the supposed favourites of the Court. He copied the letter to the King into a monthly magazine. Although it had been copied before into all the newspapers in the kingdom, none of the publishers had been prosecuted :—but an action was commenced against Almon for his republication. From the object prosecuted, this step was imputed by the Opposition to resentment, more than to the sense of justice. If justice had been the motive, it was alleged that the publisher would have been the first and principal object.

It was contended that the Attorney-General's official power of filing informations was too extensive to be compatible with freedom. A bill was proposed to modify and limit that law-officer's power; by explaining and amending an act of William and Mary, for preventing malicious informations in the Court of King's Bench. In supporting this bill, Burke made a speech replete with legal knowledge, shewing his thorough acquaintance with crown law in general, and with particular acts, in their history, detail, spirit, and constitutional tendency. Serious information and reasoning were enlivened by wit and humour. Some of the opposite party had dwelt very much on the antiquity of the power lodged in the Attorney-General. Burke, though a reverencer of antient usage when found generally accompanied with good, yet not reverencing it when productive of evil, and not conceiving the antiquity in this case proved, placed the argument in a variety of ridiculous lights. 'Several gentlemen,' he have expressed a kind of superstitious

veneration for this power, on account of its supposed antiquity; as the father of Scriblerus extolled the rust and canker which exalted a brazen pot-lid into the shield of a hero. I hope to scour off the false marks of antiquity which have made this power venerable, as effectually as the honest housemaid scoured off the false honours of the pot-lid.' While Burke impugned the power of the Attorney-General, he inveighed against licentious libels. He characterised the North Briton with a severity at once witty and just. 'Number forty-five of the North Briton is a spiritless though virulent performance, a mere mixture of vinegar and water, at once sour and vapid.' When he attacks ministerial oppressions and usurpations, he assigns, as the most immediately hurtful effects of their conduct, the incitement of popular sedition and violence. In descanting on libels, he takes occasion to speak of JUNIUS, in a manner *that implies* either, that he was not the author, or thought himself secure of concealment. 'How comes JUNIUS to have broke through the cobwebs.'

of the law, and to range uncontrouled and unpunished through the land? The myrmidons of the Court pursue him in vain. They will not spend their time on me or you; they disdain such vermin, when the *mighty boar of the forest*, that has broke their toils, is before them. When I saw his attack upon the King my blood run cold; not, that there are not in that composition many bold truths, by which a wise Prince might profit: it was the rancour and venom with which I was struck. When I expected from his daring flight his fall and final ruin, I behold him *soaring higher*, and coming souse upon both houses of parliament; nor has he dreaded the terrors of your brow, Sir,\* King, Lords, and Commons are the sport of his fury.'

Doctrines promulgated by some of the judges, particularly by the great Mansfield, were, by many friends of the constitution, deemed inimical to the rights of juries. It

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\* Sir Fletcher Norton, the Speaker, of no very pleasing aspect.

was maintained on the Bench, that in cases of libels juries were to judge of the facts and tendency only, and not of the intention ; and that the truths of the allegations could not be pled in abatement of the guilt of defamatory writings. Sergeant Glynn made a motion for an enquiry into the practice of the judges, and for ascertaining and declaring the law of the land. This motion, though somewhat different in detail, was nearly the same in principle as the bill since proposed by Mr. Erskine, and passed into a law. Burke argued, that the power exercised by the Chief Justice and his imitators was inimical to personal security, and arrogated to judges appointed by the crown the right vested by the fundamental laws in juries ; that thus a man might be deprived of his liberty and property without the judgment of his peers. After deducing the rights of juries to find the guilt as well as the fact, he went into the practice of our greatest times, since the abolition of the Star-Chamber, and shewed it to recognize this



fundamental right of juries. The motion was negatived.

Two speeches were this session delivered by Burke on the conduct of Ministry respecting Falkland Island. These speeches take a very wide range, and display the vast extent of his knowledge. As to the merits of the question, Burke seems, in this case, not equal to his private friend and public opponent, Johnson, although generally superior to him in political discussion. The Doctor demonstrates, that from the magnificence of the object, after the concessions of Spain, war would have been extremely impolitic. Johnson's observations (after discussing the main question) on the duty of Ministers, in every case consistent with national safety and honour, to avoid war, are equal to any of the productions of that great and good man's wisdom and philanthropy.

Although Mr. Burke and Dr. Johnson disagreed concerning political measures, in-

ternal and external, they still continued mutual friendship. Indeed the disagreement in principle was rather apparent than real. The Tory was the supporter of personal independence; and regarded political liberty as far as it appeared to him to produce private liberty and happiness. Though averse to resistance, unless under great oppression, he admitted that '*if the abuse be enormous, Nature will rise up, and, claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political system.*' The Whig was the friend of subordination, the reverencer of rank and dignity, and the enemy of popular violence. Johnson did not maintain the duty of obedience to Kings and rulers on the ground of any divine right they had to such obedience; but on account of the conduciveness of the obedience to the happiness of the governed. Burke allowed that it was the duty and interest of the governed to obey their governors, unless in cases of very flagrant oppression; and considered the greatest evil of certain ministerial measures to be their tendency to arouse the people to forcible re-

sistance. ‘A wise Tory and a wise Whig,’ Johnson himself observes, ‘in their politics rarely agree; their principles are the same, their modes of thinking are different: sufferance and irresistance must always be determined to be right or wrong by the circumstances of the case; and not by antecedent definitions and abstract principles.’

Although the political differences of Johnson and Burke did not interrupt affection and veneration, their diversity of opinion, combined with the rough manners of the lexicographer, frequently led to asperity; but generally witty rather than serious. Burke displayed equal force of wit and argument, but much greater suavity of manners. Dr. Robertson observed that Johnson’s jokes were not the stabs of malevolence, but *the rebukes of the righteous, which are like excellent oil, and break not the head.*—‘Oil,’ replied Burke, ‘oil of vitriol.’

Mr. Boswell is at great pains to prove that Burke possessed wit. In his conclusion

most readers will agree, but not on the grounds which he adduces. The instances which he details are puns, at best mixed, not pure wit. Some of the examples cited by Mr. Boswell seem to be introduced as much for the purpose of recording certain observations for which he values himself, as of illustrating the wit of Burke.

One day, Boswell trying to make a definition of man, that would distinguish him from all other animals, calls him 'a cooking animal'—a man alone can dress a good dinner, and every man is more or less a cook, in seasoning what he himself eats. 'Your definition,' replied Burke, 'is good; I now see the full force of the common proverb, 'there is reason in the roasting of eggs.' Boswell afterwards speaking in the club of an intention he had of going to view the Isle of Man, Burke repeated Pope's words:

'The proper study of mankind is Man.'

Boswell telling him that he had seen at a Blue-Stocking Club a number of ladies

sitting round a worthy and tall friend of their's (Johnson), and listening to his literature. 'Ay,' said Burke, 'like maids round a May-pole.'

I have already noticed instances, not of puns or conceits, but of great wit in some of his speeches; and shall, as I proceed, have occasion to quote more. His wit is often joined with humour, either light and pleasant, or satirical and contemptuous. Speaking of Lord North's determined adherence, merely because he had adopted it, to a plan of coercion, proved, from its effect, to be

hurtful, he compared him to Dr. Sangrado, when Gil Blas represented to him that death was the consequence of his specifics, and advised him to alter his method. 'No,' says the Doctor, 'I cannot leave off warm water and bleeding (although my patients do not often recover) since I have written a book in its favour.' Johnson mentions a more uniformly pleasing qualification for company than wit and humour, which Burke was allowed, by all that knew him, eminently to

possess.—‘Burke,’ he said, ‘is constantly the same; never what we call, hum-drum, never unwilling to begin to talk, nor in a hurry to leave it off.’

This year it was proposed by Mr. Strahan to the Secretaries of the Treasury, to introduce Dr. Johnson into parliament, as a man that would be a very powerful champion for Administration. Ministers, though they had experienced the force of his assistance, probably not thinking his habits and manners consistent with parliamentary decorum, did not accede to the proposition. Burke being asked his opinion concerning the propriety of Johnson’s becoming a member of parliament, replied, ‘If he had come early into the house, he certainly would have been the greatest speaker that ever was there; but then, that having been so long used to the compression of conversation, he might not have equally excelled in the expansion of argument, which the complication of matter often requires in public debates.’ It is probable, that if Dr. Johnson had pro-

cured a seat in the senate, such an opponent might have contracted the expatiation of Burke, and induced him to converge the bright rays of his eloquence into a narrower focus, to give them all possible force. The powers of the competitor would not have permitted Atalanta to deviate far from the direct road in pursuit of golden apples.\*

When Mr. Boswell mentions this opinion of Burke concerning the *lateness* of Strahan's wish to have Johnson introduced into parliament, he also narrates several observations made by him in the club and elsewhere, as anecdotes worthy of being recorded, and as displaying him in discourse and in private society. He tells us that Dr. Johnson and

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\* As Dr. Johnson, though not superior to Mr. Burke in powers, possessed much more of the mode of reasoning and expression which command attention, and produce imitation, it is probable, that he would have improved the usefulness as well as force of parliamentary eloquence, by inducing or impelling Members to direct their oratory to the question before them, instead of wandering through irrelevant subjects, and so taking up the time of the house to little purpose.

he once had a dispute concerning the comparative merits of Homer and Virgil's poems. Burke admitted the superiority of Homer's genius, but not of his work. Both brought forward the full force of their powers of philosophical criticism, and probably from emulation might exceed what either would have done without the stimulus of such opposition. That Burke really was convinced of the superiority of Virgil's poetry to that of Homer, I have not heard. The sublimity, force, rapidity, exhibition of character, and variety of Homer, were not less akin to his own genius, than the beauty, majesty, and pathetic of the Mantuan Bard.

There was obviously a nearer approximation in Johnson's mind to some of the qualities of Homer than to those of Virgil. He was much more eminent for teaching right and wrong, than exhibiting elegance and tenderness. He forcibly inculcates—

*' Quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe,  
Quid utile, quid non.  
Molle atque facetum'*



are by no means the characteristics of his works. Mr. Boswell very justly regrets that a criticism has not been preserved, which must have marked the positive and distinctive merits of the Grecian and Roman more ably than any criticism concerning their comparative powers and works that we have on record. A man of equal comprehensiveness and force of understanding with either, though less habituated to critical disquisitions, has, since that time, had an argument with Burke on the same subject.

Burke, thoroughly acquainted with the Greek and Roman classics, preferred Virgil and Lucretius to any of the Latin poets, and could repeat the greater part of both. It was not merely as a man of taste, nor even as a man of feeling, that he was rapturously fond of Virgil; not the beauty and tenderness only of that enchanting poet, but his philosophy rendered him a peculiar favourite of Burke. The pathos of the fourth, the sublime ethics of the sixth *Æneid*, and the philosophical passages of the *Georgics*, he

could repeat from beginning to end. Although he by no means approved of Lucretius's theology, he was charmed with many parts of his poem, particularly with his just and forcible description of the effects of superstition. Brilliant as was his imagination, he delighted more in those parts of poetical works which afforded knowledge physical or moral, especially the latter, and general principles, than with those parts that abound in imagery. He read Horace's satires, and his critical and ethical epistles, with more pleasure than his most poetical odes.

Although he shewed himself thoroughly acquainted with the eloquence and history of the Romans, and, as a man of taste and genius, must have been pleased with such monuments of excellence, neither the Latin historians, nor even the Latin orators, were his peculiar favourites. Admiring the force and philosophy of Tacitus, he disliked his style, and indeed all styles in which there was an appearance of study or affectation. In

Homer, although he chiefly admired the sublimity, yet he was most delighted with the pictures of characters and manners. On account of its more minute delineation of antient society, he read the *Odyssey* more frequently than the *Iliad*. He was deeply conversant in the philosophy of Greece, abstruse and practical. In the earlier part of his life he devoted himself principally to the former, but afterwards to the latter. Which of the great historians he mostly admired I have not heard. It is almost needless to say that Demosthenes was his favourite orator. Among dramatic writers, Euripides was more relished by him than even Sophocles: the poet who described men as they were, than the poet who drew them as they ought to be—the copier from experience than from theory.

Human nature was Burke's favourite study: those writings he perused with the most exquisite delight, which exhibited particular characters, general manners, the cognitive and active principles of the human

mind, and their operation in the relations and duties of society. This predilection for pictures of moral nature might be farther illustrated from the modern writers whom he preferred : among these were Bacon and Shakespeare, of the highest order ; and of a high, though inferior order, Fielding, Le Sage, and especially Addison. Concerning Fielding he differed with his friend Johnson, and preferred him to Richardson : the painter from real life to the painter from his own fancy. Mr. Burke was very fond of novels in general, and very often amused friendly parties at his own house with reading good new works of that kind ; and still more so old. He was very partial to Smollet's Roderick Random, as a natural and excellent description of a young man, coming, with all his provincial notions and peculiarities, to push his fortune in the capital. Though he preferred Fielding on the whole, yet he thought Smollet's hero, in point of enterprize and active exertion, preferable to Tom Jones. ' Both,' he said, ' set out poor from their respective homes. Roderick, by in-

du endeavours to supply his wants ;  
 w ones, benevolent and meritorious as  
 his character was in many respects, yet, when  
 s nothing to depend on but his own  
 continues in a state of inaction. The  
 con of Roderick was in this more na-  
 tural ; and ore of imitation than  
 that of s. s. of the novel of  
 F ter, greatly preferred to  
 t wh of s. His *precise* opinion  
 ( P I have not learned : Swift he did  
 relish as a describer of human nature,  
 because he only gave one side.

The communicativeness of Mr. Boswell  
 often brings out particulars respecting him-  
 self, which many writers would have spared.  
 He informs us, that when he was proposed  
 to be a member of the club, Mr. Burke ob-  
 jected to him, *as not being fit*. Johnson,  
 however, being desirous to have Boswell  
 admitted, the judgment of Burke gave  
 way, in this instance, to the inclination of  
 his friend. After Mr. Boswell was admitted  
 into the Gerrard-street club, Burke treated

him with that easy and frank politeness, which was habitual to him, which the good-natured and obliging disposition of Boswell deserved, and which he construed to be intimate friendship. The eager desire of Boswell to be acquainted with men of eminence, received from his own sanguine temper more gratification than from the actual notice of the personages whose company he courted. Common civility from such he often fancied to be a most distinguishing regard: no wonder then that the engaging manners of Burke should pass with him for marks of peculiar attachment to himself. Great men are generally introduced by Mr. Boswell, in order to talk of himself, a subject on which he always dwells with peculiar pleasure. His egotism, however, is not the effect of arrogant haughtiness, but of good-natured vanity. He certainly has been of considerable advantage to the public by the many facts he has recorded concerning other great men, as well as the object of his adoration. If there be no great clearness of arrangement, or comprehensive views of

whole characters and subjects, there is pleasantness and utility of collection. The public may not be much entertained with the history of the Ashbourn dead cat, or of Veronica, the writer's great grandmother, but are pleased and instructed by authentic narratives of conversations between the most eminent men of the age. Those who care little about the genealogical history of Auchinleck and Balmuto, about the chieftainship of Macleod or of Raasay, are pleased to be informed concerning Beauclerk, Goldsmith, Johnson, and Burke.

Burke entertained a poor opinion of the Beggar's Opera. He allowed it, on the whole, very inconsiderable merit. He thought its intellectual excellence small, and totally overbalanced by its moral defects. He did not admit the common-place objection, that it was calculated to increase the number of robbers. Those who betake themselves to the highway, he thought it probable, are impelled by much more powerful motives than the imitation of a fictitious robber, ex-

hibited on the stage. It is indeed equally improbable that a man should become a highwayman from seeing Macheath, as that a woman should become a prostitute from seeing Jenny Diver. The mischief consisted, he thought, in arraying vice in agreeable colours, and representing the greatest crimes without exciting the proper detestation; that there is more pains taken to shew that others are greater villains than thieves and highwaymen, than to teach and induce these to refrain from their villanies. Such a comparison might probably appear to the perspicacious understanding and powerful invention of Burke as of obvious recollection if true, or easy conception if feigned. He might perceive that if, according to the hypothesis of the *Beggar's Opera*, the principles of a robber are similar to those of a courtier, it required merely common observation to assimilate the character; but Burke did not admit the fact. The *Beggar's Opera*, with its sequel, *Polly*, represents mankind, in civilized society, as universally vicious; and, in a savage state only as



virtuous. The only good men, by Gay's exhibition, are Maroons. Burke had formed a very different opinion of polished society, and uniformly maintained that, as his experience increased, he had learned to think more favourably of the civilized world. Gibbon has an observation on the *Beggar's Opera*, which, whether just or not, is new and ingenious: 'It has,' he said, 'had a beneficial effect in refining highwaymen, and making them less ferocious, more polite; in short, more like gentlemen.' Mr. Courtenay, on hearing this, said, with his usual happiness of witty allusion, 'then Gay was the Orpheus of highwaymen.'

Full as the mind of Burke was, it was daily and hourly receiving accessions. Untainted by the contagion of fashionable vice and frivolity, he directed to reading and conversation those hours which were not employed in parliamentary duties, in necessary business, and in salubrious exercise. From whatever he read he derived instruction; every other metal he transmuted into

that malleable, ductile, and valuable metal of which his own mind consisted. He generally read with a pen in his hand, to make extracts and observations, especially the latter. A most uncommon memory retained whatever he read ; and the quick comprehension of his mind immediately saw its class and tendency. Perhaps no man in Britain had such a facility of acquiring knowledge, with so indefatigable application. He had an exquisite taste for the fine arts ; and was deemed by Sir Joshua Reynolds the best judge of pictures he ever knew. Much of his leisure time was spent in Sir Joshua's house. The amusement in which he most delighted was the theatre. He did not, like Johnson, condemn scenical personation ; he had a high admiration of theatrical excellence ; his taste was gratified by the perfect imitation of human characters and passions, which a Garrick and a Siddons exhibited. Mr. Burke had very great pleasure in beholding, as well as in reading, the dramatic performances of his friend and countryman, Mr. Murphy, that distinguished

author, whose powers and knowledge have contributed so agreeable and valuable additions to English literature. He thought that both as a comic and serious writer he shewed a profound insight into man in his general nature, as well as peculiar diversities arising from local and temporary circumstances, prejudices, opinions, fashions, and customs. His genius he thought both strong and versatile. He regarded with great admiration the comedy of 'All in the Wrong,' which exhibits so just, natural, and striking a picture of self-tormenting jealousy;\* drawing inferences productive of misery to its votaries from occurrences and circumstances in themselves so totally accidental and indifferent. He thought also very highly of 'The Way to Keep Him,'

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\* The distinguishing critic will observe that Mr. Murphy takes a different ground here from our tragic bard. The characters in 'All in the Wrong' are uneasy and unhappy from the perversion of objects by themselves; whereas in 'Othello,' the misery proceeds from villainy acting upon credulity. In 'All in the Wrong' it is jealousy under a different aspect, and arising from a different source; but still the aspect and source are natural, and often found in life.

both as to plot, character, and moral tendency ; that with great variety and force of humour, with agreeable and interesting scenes, all admirably connected, and tending to one end, it taught, and strongly inculcated, on the one hand, the evils of conjugal infidelity ; and on the other, the most prudent and effectual means of securing virtue, and promoting happiness in the marriage state.\* Nor was he less pleased with the excellent exhibition of unsteadiness of character in ‘ Know Your Own Mind ;’ a play,

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\* A few years after the publication of his ‘ All in the Wrong’ Mr. Murphy received a letter from a bookseller in Vienna, informing him that both his admirable comedies had been translated into the German language ; and earnestly urging him to favour the world with other dramatic performances. Then Germany borrowed taste and genius, wit and humour, from Britain, where they actually did exist ; now, Britain condescends, able as are her own sons in dramatic literature, to seek for the swelling, ranting, pompous, extravagant compositions of the German dramatist. Then Germany imported from England works favourable to the marriage vow, and to those virtues by which society is upheld ; now England imports from Germany works countenancing transgressions of the marriage vow, unrestrained gratifications of passion, and those vices which tend to the subversion of society.

in which the mind of the author, though fully matured in the experience of life, displays a greater variety of just, and often-appearing characters, than perhaps any of his former works.\* The representation of filial affection in 'The Grecian Daughter' no less pleased Mr. Burke than these three admirable comedies. He was much amused and diverted with the lighter dramatic works of the same author. He could repeat the greater part of the 'Citizen,' and of the 'Apprentice,' and we doubt not he equally relished the 'Upholsterer,' and other productions. Mr. Burke learned an anecdote respecting the 'Apprentice,' that he often related with great glee: Mr. Murphy, when he first prepared his *coup d'essai* for the stage,

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\* 'The Way to Keep Him,' and 'All in the Wrong,' shew a thorough acquaintance with the workings of passion and the inculcations of virtue in any society. 'Know Your Own Mind' displays not only *that* knowledge, but also a thorough insight into characters as modified by present manners. The various sources and modes of defamation, for instance, in the characters of *Dasbwood* and *Malvil*; the insolence of illiberal patronage in *Mrs. Bremley*, are depicted by the hand of a master.

about the commencement of his acquaintance with the subject of my biography, had composed it without the character of *Wingate*, the hero's father. He had an uncle, a trader in the city, that had often endeavoured to enrich his mind with economical maxims, and to prove to him the uselessness of literature. Mr. Murphy conceiving himself to be still a favourite with his uncle, notwithstanding his dereliction of the mercantile path he had chalked out for him, expected a handsome legacy at his death; and on the faith of it, with juvenile imprudence, incurred a debt of two hundred pounds. On the decease of the uncle, he found there was not a farthing bequeathed to him. In great anxiety about his embarrassment, he at last reflected on the lessons of old Jeffery —, and thought he would make not a bad figure as a character in his farce. He accordingly brought him forward as *Old Wingate*, recommending Cocker's Arithmetic as the only book worthy of being studied, and keeping very closely to the sentiments and language of his worthy

relation. The added personage tended considerably to the great success of the performance. ' So,' said Mr. Murphy, ' I made old Jeffery at last extricate me from my difficulties.'

Part of the recess Mr. Burke spent at Beaconsfield: there his taste appeared in various fine improvements of natural beauty. But higher qualities procured him the respect and love of all within the sphere of his action; not those only who knew and could appreciate his talents, and who, perhaps dazzled by the lustre of his genius, might see his conduct imperfectly; but those who knew nothing of him but as a country gentleman. The peasants, who were benefitted by his counsels; the labourers, for whose employment, and the melioration of whose condition, he was daily devising means; the poor, who found him a bountiful benefactor; all joined in praising his wisdom and blessing his goodness. He planned various institutions, some of which I shall, in the sequel, detail, for making the poorer mechanics and

labourers save a little from their wages or profits to assist each other in sickness or poverty, and give to their children the education necessary or useful in their humble stations. He was himself, in country as in town, a man of study and business. That time was given to relaxation which remained from active duties. *Otium laborque non temporibus divisa; quod labori supererat otio datum.* Mr. Burke was not only fond of reading novels, but of reading them aloud to his company. Ladies were always extremely delighted to have him to read works of that sort. One day, a beautiful young lady of the name of Miss Paine had come over from the charming seat of Paine's Hill, near Cobham, to visit Mrs. Burke, and was a hearer of one of these readings. The phrase *Mons Veneris* happening to occur, the young lady asked the meaning? 'Paine's Hill,' replied the gallant Edmund.

So extremely versatile was his wonderful mind, that he could amuse himself with playing at tee-totum or push-pin with



children ; or with entering into their thoughts and feelings in the histories of Little Thumb and Jack the Giant-killer. Mr. Murphy has frequently seen him at these pastimes, and apparently totally un-bent. ‘ Half an hour might pass,’ said this gentleman, ‘ during which he would keep speaking in such a way that you could see no more in him than an ordinary man, good-naturedly amusing his young auditors, when some observation or suggestion calling his attention, a remark of the most profound wisdom would slip out, and he would return to his tee-totum.’

His objects at his villa and in the senate were the same,—to promote the welfare of that portion of mankind on which his actions might operate. Burke, in every part of his conduct, shewed that the wisdom which he pursued was practical. He was uniformly the enemy of speculative innovations. At Beaconsfield he bestowed much attention on farming. The estate would let at about 600*l.* a year ; three-fourths of it he culti-

vated himself. As a farmer he pursued that plan which had been found, by experience, to produce the best corn and cattle; and was, in fact, without any unusual expence, one of the most successful farmers in the county. When in town he had his mutton, poultry, and all other meats, except beef; also the various productions of the dairy and gardens, from his own estate, brought by his own horses and carts. The same horses which served for his carriage were employed on his farms. Both in town and country he was remarkable for hospitality—an hospitality of real benevolence: there was no parade of *style*, no ostentatious display of side-boards, no sumptuous entertainments; but every thing plain, substantial, and agreeable, with kind looks, kind manners, and a hearty welcome. He would often insist, in town, on eight or ten of his acquaintances going home with him to eat *mutton-chops* or *beef-steaks*; and, on such occasions, literally gave such dinners—dinners, with the zest of his company, to which few could be found equal. He liked a cheerful

glass, but never drank to excess. During dinner his beverage was water, and afterwards generally claret or some other light wine, and he seldom exceeded a bottle. His conversation was always so animated and so flowing, his spirits so exhilarated, that the wine could make no addition.

His benevolence extended itself to common beggars. In walking in the streets he generally disposed of all the silver he had in his pocket to the various mendicants who solicited his charity. He imputed inattention to such petitions not to the policy of discouraging beggars, but to unwillingness to part with money.

Both as a student and a man of business he had unceasing industry. He was an early riser, and used to dispatch many important affairs while some of his friends were recruiting themselves from the watching of the tavern or the ferment of the gaming-house. In his way to the House he frequently called on a friend equal in ability

even to himself, but very inferior in point of regularity, and found him at three o'clock beginning his breakfast. ' There's Charles,' he would say, ' whilst I am exhausted by reading and business, he is quite fresh ; it is no wonder he is so much more vigorous in the House.'

Part of the summer was frequently devoted to revisiting his native country, or in viewing different places in England. He sometimes travelled in the stage-coach, and was an exquisitely agreeable companion. He knew the history, physical and moral, of every place he passed through, and entertained his fellow travellers with pleasing or useful anecdotes and observations, according to their capacity or inclination. I have heard from a lady that once came in the coach with him a considerable part of the road from Yorkshire, without knowing who he was, that he fixed the attention of all the passengers by his great fund of local knowledge, and the anecdotes with which it was interspersed. They all concurred in

thinking him the most entertaining man they had ever met. Seeing him afterwards in London, she found that he who had delighted a stage-coach company was a man

‘ The applause of listening senates to command.’

In summer, 1772, he visited the Continent: there he first saw the fair Marie Antoinette, whose accomplishments and graces made such an impression on a mind feelingly alive to the sublime and beautiful, and whose charms and misfortunes he has since described with so pathetic eloquence.

The literary and political eminence of Burke rendered him, while in France, courted by the antimonarchical and antihierarchical philosophers of the time. One of the subjects of discussion between him and the philosophers of France was the merit of Beattie’s\* *Essay on Truth*. He seems to have

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\* I here must acknowledge the justness of a remark made by a *profound* critic on a subject which occupied the fourth part of the said critic’s review of this work, *viz.* that Beattie ought to be spelt with two t’s. The said critic takes occasion to abuse schoolmasters. As there is nothing in the work

been as partial *for* Beattie as *against* Hume. To an impartial reader it might appear surprising, that men, possessed themselves of such powers of reasoning as Burke and Johnson, should admire the declamatory writings of Beattie, if he were not to recollect that the wisest men do not always judge as wise men, but frequently form opinions which persons, much their inferiors, can perceive to be erroneous. It might be attributed to their regard for religion, that they so much venerated its zealous defender : but were that the sole cause, they would have estimated its champions by their ability, and preferred the logical closeness of Campbell, and the cautious modest profoundness of Reid, to the confident vivacity of Beattie.\*

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before him that in the smallest degree relates to that fraternity, it is probable he may still feel sore from the impression of the means applied by them to communicate learning to those whose heads are slow of apprehension ; and make his tongue or pen in and out of place endeavour to revenge the sufferings of dulness.

\* It is said that, besides his zeal for orthodoxy, his vanity as an author prompted Beattie to abuse Hume. Hume, on perusing some of his poems, called them *milk and water* verses ; which, it is said, the divine never forgave. We

But though the *reasonings* of Beattie be neither very profound nor very ingenious, his *doctrines* are just and salutary. It was the doctrines more than the reasonings which the infidel followers of Voltaire, Helvetius, and Rousseau, attacked. In the religious scepticism and political theories of these writers Burke's sagacious mind saw the probable overthrow of religion and government. His sentiments he took occasion the following session to communicate to the House of Commons. That subject not relating to any immediate business before the House or to any danger to common minds, imminent or even distantly probable, his speech was not taken down with the usual accuracy. A copy, however, is extant, of which the following summary is given by the editors of his Posthumous Works. 'He pointed out the conspiracy of atheism to the

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find the arguments of Beattie much more frequently quoted, and his book much more highly esteemed, by pious well-disposed men, of no very great reach, than by able men (except Johnson and Burke), even of the Christian persuasion.

watchful jealousy of governments. He professed that he was not over fond of calling in the aid of the secular arm to suppress doctrines and opinions; but if ever it was to be raised, it should be against those enemies of their kind, who would take from us the noblest prerogative of our nature, that of being a religious animal.' Then comes the following quotation from the speech. 'Already, under the systematic attacks of those men, I see many of the props of good government beginning to fail. I see propagated principles which will not leave to religion even a toleration, and make virtue herself less than a name,' ('he recommended that a grand alliance should be formed among all believers') 'against those ministers of rebellious darkness, who were endeavouring to shake all the works of God, established in beauty and order.'

These were opinions and sentiments very inimical, if not to a revolution in France, at least to *the* revolution which has actually



taken place, with all its concomitant circumstances.

This session Sir Henry Houghton made a motion for relieving the Dissenters from subscription and the penal laws. The supporters of the church doctrines brought forward the usual arguments; that Dissenters were not actually liable to the punishments annexed to the penal statutes; and that an attempt to set aside the articles was an attack on Christianity. Burke combatted these arguments with energetic eloquence, and a warmth rising almost to enthusiasm. 'The Dissenters,' he said, 'enjoy liberty by connivance. What is *liberty by connivance*, but a temporary relaxation of slavery? Is this a sort of LIBERTY calculated for the meridian of ENGLAND? You are desirous to keep the rod hanging over Dissenters' heads, at the very instant you assure them they shall never smart under its stripes. Why not release them from the dread of these penal statutes, the cruelty of which

shocks your generous natures so much, that you think it incumbent on you to declare they should never be put into execution? The question answers itself; to cavil at its propriety is to carp at truth, and elude conviction. As to toleration being an attack on Christianity, it is an assertion contrary to truth and history. By toleration Christianity flourished.' (This proposition and its converse he proves by an historical detail.) 'The want of toleration has lessened the number of believers; I would have all Protestants united, that we may be the better able to make a common cause against Infidels. THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND HAS NOT A FIRMER FRIEND THAN MYSELF. I wish her head may reach that heaven, to which she would conduct us; but I would also wish her family as numerous as possible. I would have her with wide extended arms receive every believer, not with unnatural austerity reproach her offspring, and drive them to seek ease, pleasure, and comfort, in the harlot lap of Infidelity.'

In these opinions and sentiments there was liberality without laxity. From Burke's support of the Dissenters during a part of his life, and his disapprobation of some of their proceedings during another part, his detractors have endeavoured to prove that he was inconsistent. This is a conclusion of very hasty reasoning. Unless it be proved that the Dissenters in 1772, and those in 1790, maintained exactly the same opinions, and in the same circumstances of society, Burke's support of their cause at the one time, and opposition to it at the other, cannot be evinced to be inconsistent. He who vindicates toleration may resist encroachment. The Dissenters in 1772 solicited protection: before 1790 some of them had avowed their expectations that the established church would be subverted. The difference in the former period consisted chiefly in modes of worship and ecclesiastical government, more than in the substance of articles of faith and practical precepts: in the latter, sentiments were publicly avowed

ininical to the existence of both church and state. Although all Dissenters were far from having imbibed such notions, or formed such intentions ; yet, as many, and especially the leading men among them, had done so, wisdom dictated a caution before unnecessary. Besides, there are states of society in which it would be proper to counteract the very opinions that it would be right to cherish in different circumstances. In the early part of this reign, the power of the executive branch of the constitution was preponderant : wisdom directed and patriotism prompted their votaries to throw their weight into the popular scale. Soon after the French revolution, doctrines prevailed, tending to elevate the popular branch much beyond its due proportion. The same wisdom directed and the same patriotism prompted its votaries to counteract that prevalence. BURKE'S CONDUCT AROSE FROM IDENTITY OF PRINCIPLE, VARYING ITS OPERATIONS IN DIVERSITY OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

Sir Henry Houghton's motion passed through the House of Commons, but was thrown out in the House of Lords.

The discontinuance of other duties, as Burke had foreseen, was far from satisfying the Americans, whilst that on tea was reserved. They considered the relinquishment as extorted by their resistance, not as granted to their solicitations. The remaining duty on tea they thought the maintenance by Parliament of the principle of taxation, while a more convenient opportunity was waited for extending its operation. Their distrust of the mother country continued. Associations were formed to discourage the use of tea and to resist its importation.

East India affairs, in the session of 1772, became a principal subject of parliamentary deliberation. The proceedings of the legislature respecting India, at that time, constitute an important epoch in the history of this reign: not only for the new regulations

for the management of the East, but for bringing to a crisis our disputes with the West: they constitute also an epoch in the life of Burke, as he now commenced the investigation of subjects which afterwards occupied so much of his labours.

The abuses of the Company's servants in India had raised an outcry in this country. Burke made accurate inquiries into the alleged oppressions and cruelties, and, by oral testimony and written documents, acquired a very exact and extensive knowledge of the history, actual state, abuses, means of correction, and general interests of British India.

Parliament found the affairs of the Company of such complication, difficulty, and importance, that they chose a Select Committee, to inquire during the recess, into the condition of the commercial and territorial possessions. The ruling Directors, apprehensive that the full disclosure of the abuses of their servants would induce Government

to intermeddle in concerns hitherto guided by themselves and their creatures, thought of means to prevent the interference. Hoping that, by reposing unlimited confidence in a popular man, they might stop the public clamour, and also take from Government the most plausible pretext for interfering in their affairs, they proposed to send Burke to India with discretionary powers, as the head of a commission for the reform of abuses. He refused the appointment, determined to adhere to his party.

Besides the plea of the misconduct of their servants, there was another reason in the finances of the India Company, for which Government proposed to take a direction in the management of their affairs. Their pecuniary concerns had, according to Ministry, become very much embarrassed. Being unable to make good their payments, they applied to Parliament for assistance, and represented that their difficulties were owing chiefly to the want of the usual market for their tea in America; in consequence of

which they had seventeen millions of pounds lying in their warehouses. Lord North alleged, that the proceedings of the Select Committee, during the recess, had been too slow for the urgency of the case; and proposed a Secret Committee, consisting of eleven members. This Committee being appointed, went over the commercial and political affairs of the Company with so great dispatch, that after sitting nine days, from November 28th to December 7th, 1772, it procured such information as Lord North professed to think a sufficient ground for very important measures. The first was a bill to restrain the Company for a limited time from sending a commission of supervision to their Presidencies in India. The proposed commission was, by the supporters of the bill, represented as by far too expensive for the involved state of the Company's finances. Burke took a very extensive view of the constitution of the Company, and its actual state. This speech was one of the numberless instances, *paratum*



*accessisse ad causam* ; that he was prepared for the subject in discussion, so prepared as implied not merely special inquiry for a temporary purpose, but general systematic information. He inferred from their *charters*, that the proposed restraint was an *invasion of their rights* ; and from the reports of the Committee, that there did not exist a necessity, which alone could justify the proposed invasion. From the quickness with which the reports had been made out, respecting the complicated concerns of so great a company, he contended that it arose not from a full examination of their affairs, but from a previous resolution. To serious reasonings he joined wit and ridicule. Speaking of the two Committees, the open and the secret, he said, ‘ Here is a Committee appointed last session, a fair and open Committee, which has produced nothing. This was the lawful wife, publicly avowed ; but finding her *barren*, the Minister has taken a little snug one which he calls a Secret Committee, and this bill is her *first-born*.

Indeed from the singular expedition of this extraordinary delivery, I suspect she was pregnant BEFORE *wedlock*.'

At a farther stage of the bill he made another speech, shewing the various proceedings of Parliament respecting the India Company, from its commencement, the consequences of the several acts ; and, on this new ground, maintaining the inexpediency of the proposed bill. The subject had before gone through the discussion of the ablest speakers on both sides ; but Burke's genius, after the question appeared exhausted, both by others and himself, was able to give it all the charms of novelty. He again placed the dissimilar speed of the two Committees in a very ludicrous view. ' One has been so slow, that the Company expects no redress from it ; the other so rapid, that the Company know not where it will stop : like the fly of a jack, the one has gone hey-go-mad, the other like the ponderous lead at the other end.' In describing ironically, in this speech, the qualifications of a modern

good member of parliament, he quotes the following rules for what formerly made a good monk: ‘ *Tria faciunt monachum. Bene loqui de superiore. Legere breviarium taliter qualiter, et sinere res vadere ut vadunt:*’ which, applying to a member, he translated so— ‘Speak well of the Minister; read the lesson he sets you; and let the State take care of itself.’ Such a quotation, respecting the qualifications of a monk, is not that of a St. Omers papist.

These instances, among numberless others, shew the opinion of Johnson, that Burke did not possess wit, to be erroneous.

The following is part of his peroration on the probable consequences of the influx of Indian wealth if at the disposal of the Crown: ‘What will become of us, if the Ganges pours in upon us in a new tide of corruption? Should the evil genius of British Liberty so ordain it, I fear this house will be so far from removing the corruption of the East, that it will, itself, be from the East

corrupted. I fear more from the infection of that place than I hope from your virtue. Was it not the sudden plunder of the East that gave the final blow to the freedom of Rome? What reason have we to expect a better fate? I attest, heaven and earth, that in all places, and all times, I HAVE HITHERTO SHOVED BY THE GILDED HAND OF CORRUPTION, and endeavoured to stem the torrent which threatens to overwhelm this island.

Although the friends of Burke must acknowledge that sometimes the vigour of his fancy and 'the torrent of impetuous passion transported him beyond the bounds of reason,' his enemies cannot disprove the truth of his assertion, 'I HAVE SHOVED BY CORRUPTION.' If emolument could have tempted him, can it be doubted that a man of his extraordinary powers might have had the most profitable offices? Can we suppose that the Duke of Grafton and Lord North, both of whom are known to have employed very inferior men as literary and political

supporters, would not have given a very high price to purchase the powers of Burke? If he had chosen the opposite cause, his parliamentary and literary talents might have been exercised in courting the favour of the most opulent body in the world: he might have promoted the violent and inflammatory measures of the citizens of London; their plans of a total change in Parliament, and their insolent abusive remonstrances to the Sovereign: City appointments of the most lucrative kind would have been the sure rewards of sedition and disloyalty, arrayed in all the charms of wit and eloquence.

The steady and powerful friend of rational liberty, Burke was the determined enemy of court corruption and of democratical licentiousness; directing his efforts against the one or the other, as it happened at the time to require resistance. It was his uniform opinion, that eastern riches were producing a most important and hurtful change in the manners and morals of Britain; an

opinion that became stronger and stronger, as instances multiplied, and his experience increased.

Although the act respecting India supervisions passed by a considerable majority in Parliament, it excited great clamours among many of the proprietors. All parties, indeed, admitted that the Company was involved in pecuniary difficulties; yet many said they were only temporary; and that the restraint, imposed on them by the new act, was merely to promote ministerial purposes. The Ministry, however, proceeded to make many other regulations, as remedies to the alledged disorders of their finances. Burke joined his eloquence to the precision and legal knowledge of Dunning, and the commercial information of Johnstone, in vigorously opposing the principle of the regulations, and many of the details. One law empowered the Company to export their teas, *duty free*, wherever they could find a market. The avowed object of this resolution was to give relief to the India

Company : it was, besides, the intention of Ministry to increase the import revenue from America.

There was this great difference between Lord North and Burke, that Lord North could perceive one class of objects and interests separately, but seldom attended to their relation to other classes of objects and their interests, and the probable effect to the nation in general. Burke thoroughly comprehending the separate interests of different members of the state, grasped the whole in his mind, and considered measures immediately affecting one part, not only in their relation to that one part, but to all the parts and to the whole. Lord North considered the India Company and revenue only : Burke the interests of the whole empire. He perceived that the Americans would see the intention of the drawback on exported tea, would persist in their associations to resist its importation, although lowered in price ; because their objection was not to the price but to the principle.

He foretold that this new resolution would bring the disputes to a crisis: and that Britain must either entirely abandon the duty or enforce taxation. From this alternative, he predicted that commercial and political evils would arise, which would altogether overbalance the partial advantage to the revenue and to Indian commerce. Partial and temporary expedients are more adequate to the capacity of the majority of mankind, than great and comprehensive counsels. Lord North's proposition was adopted.

The India Company sent out three ships for Boston, laden with tea.

The Bostonians, on hearing of this cargo and its destination, renewed the associations into which they, in common with other colonies, had entered. The populace tumultuously surrounded the houses of the consignees of the tea, to frighten them from acting. When the ships arrived, a meeting was held by the Bostonians and the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns, at which



it was determined that the ships, with their cargoes, should be sent back. Notice of this resolution was given to the Company's agents. Meanwhile, difficulties arose\* about sending off ships. A clearance from the Custom-house could not be obtained; they could not pass a fort that commanded the mouth of the harbour, without the permission of the Governor, which he refused. On this the meeting was dissolved, and there was a general cry of 'a mob! a mob!' A number of armed men, disguised as Indians, boarded the ships, and threw the cargoes into the sea.

When the news of this outrage was brought to England, it was communicated to Parliament by a message from the King. Two things were alledged by Ministers as necessary to be insisted on:—satisfaction to the India Company for the injury they had sustained, and to the honour of the British nation for the insult it had received. For

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\* See Stedman's History of the American War, vol. i. p. 87.

these purposes a bill was proposed, to shut up the port of Boston, except for stores for his Majesty's service, and the necessaries of life for the inhabitants, until peace and good order should be restored, and satisfaction made to the sufferers.

The bill, in its progress through the House of Commons, met with very able and animated opposition, especially from Mr. Dempster, Governor Johnstone, Colonel Barré, and, most of all, from Burke.

His speech on this occasion, independent of its reasoning, in relation to the Boston-port bill, may be considered as a history of the disputes between England and the colonies previous to the irreconcilable quarrel. He contended that, if the punishment was for resistance, all the northern provinces were equally repugnant to the authority of Parliament: that if the punishment was merited on account of disaffection, all these provinces were equally disaffected: if the punishment was intended merely on account

of the outrage, there was no evidence that all the Bostonians were concerned. Why then should they be ALL implicated in the punishment? Time should be allowed for finding out the guilty, instead of hurrying the bill through Parliament. The law was inexpedient, as our own trade must suffer, and not only by preclusion from Boston; but that other colonies were equally inimical to the tea duty as Massachuset, and had discontinued, or at least diminished, their trade with Britain. In answer to that part which denied the justice of punishing a whole city for the act of certain inhabitants, Lord North alledged the analogy of the law of England, which ordained that a whole district should indemnify a person robbed within its precincts, because its police, if vigilant and active, might have prevented the crime. He adduced also the case of the city of Edinburgh, the whole inhabitants of which had been fined for the riot of a part, in the case of Porteus.\* Burke

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\* As some readers may not recollect this case, although very noted, I shall mention it in a few words. A riot

shewed the diversity of the cases of Boston and Edinburgh.

From his speeches the following statement of difference was drawn, and transcribed into the periodical publications of the time.

## PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

### *EDINBURGH.*

Begun the 10th of February, 1737, and ended June 21st, having continued four months.

The Provost and Magistrates of Edinburgh, the Judges of Scotland, and many other witnesses, examined at the bar of the House.

Counsel and evidence for the Magistrates and City fully heard at the bar.

### *BOSTON.*

Begun the 14th, and ended the 31st of March, 1774, being in all seventeen days.

Witnesses examined by the Privy Council, and their evidence suppressed.

The Agent refused a hearing at the bar.

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having taken place in Edinburgh, in 1736, at the execution of a smuggler, the military were called in. Porteus, their Captain, ordered them to fire before the hour was expired. Some persons were killed. Porteus was tried and condemned for murder, but pardoned. A mob, incensed at this pardon, seized Porteus, and hanged him.

Two Members for Edinburgh, forty-five for Scotland, in the Lower House, and sixteen in the Upper.

Charge—an overt act of rebellion, and an atrocious murder; proved on a full hearing, and by competent evidences.

Frequent conferences held between the two Houses, to compare the evidence, &c.

Punishment, a fine of 2000*l*.

Not one Member for Boston in either House, nor for all or any part of America, nor even a voice in electing one.

Charge—a riot and trespass; no evidence, and no hearing.

Not one conference.

Punishment—the loss of their port, to the injury of the town, at the lowest rate, 500,000*l*. the restoration of their port, and the use of their property left at the King's mercy; after they shall have paid for rotten, ~~tea~~ the price of sound, to the amount of 30,000*l*.

Proof—Journals of the Lords and Commons, in 1737, against Edinburgh and the Bill.

Proof—Journals of the Lords and Commons, 1774, and the Boston-port Bill.

April 19, 1774, a motion was made by Mr. Rose Fuller, for repealing the tea duty. In support of this proposition, Burke made a speech more celebrated than any he had

yet spoken. This speech is generally known by the title of *Burke's Speech on American Taxation*. He deduced the history of the American colonies, and the policy of this country from their first settlement to the commencement of the present reign. He demonstrated the advantages accruing to this country from the old system of policy, and shewed that the measures of this King's Ministers were a deviation from that system; a deviation injurious both to Britain and the colonies. He divided our policy into four parts, comprehending four periods antecedent to Lord North's administration: first, during former reigns, when *Britain pursued trade and forgot revenue*; when the only restraint imposed on America was the Navigation Act. He winds up a most exact and masterly account of the first period in the following words:

‘ All this was done by England, whilst England pursued trade, and forgot revenue. You not only acquired commerce, but you actually created the very objects of trade in America; and by that creation you raised

the trade of this kingdom at least four fold. America had the compensation of your capital, which made her bear her servitude. She had, except the commercial restraint, every characteristic mark of a free people in all her internal concerns. She had the image of the British Constitution. She had the substance:—she was taxed by her own representatives. This whole state of commercial servitude and civil liberty, taken together, is certainly not perfect freedom; but, comparing it with the ordinary circumstances of human nature, it was an happy and a liberal condition.

The second period is that from the first idea of a revenue from America to the Stamp Act. 'A new scheme of government was adopted (by court favouritism); a necessity was declared of keeping up no less than twenty new regiments, with twenty colonels capable of seats in the house. Country gentlemen, the great patrons of economy and the great resisters of a standing armed force, would not have voted for so large and

expensive an army, if they had been sure it was to be at their cost. But hopes of another kind were held out to them; and in particular I well remember, that Mr. Townshend, in a brilliant harangue on this subject, dazzled them by playing before their eyes the image of a revenue from America. Here began to dawn the first glimmerings of the new colony system.'

He pursues this new plan through Grenville's administration, in the preceding regulations, and the famous Stamp Act. This second period he calls that of begun revenue and begun disturbance. This brings him to the means for allaying the disorders during the Rockingham Administration—the third period, which he calls the period of repeal, of the restoration of the ancient system, and of the ancient tranquillity and concord. From the third period he goes on to the Revenue Act of the Grafton Administration, which he terms the fourth period; that in which the conciliating policy of the



third was abandoned, and the irritating policy of the second was revived.

In viewing the proceedings respecting the colonies during this reign, he was led into an examination of the characters of the several ministers who conducted affairs since America engrossed the attention of Government ; to shew the influence of those characters in producing their several measures. Perhaps it will be difficult to find in any history more of particular truth and general philosophy, more accurate statement of fact, more profound assignation of cause, than in the chief characters which he draws. There is no sacrifice of truth to rhetoric, by subtile opposition of qualities, no mosaic contrasts, no introduction of pairs, no studied choice of phrase, or measurement of period ; but, in clear, strong, though simple language, developement of intellectual and moral qualities, as modified by existing situation, proceeding from known causes, and displayed in counsels and actions.

Although his characters are generally known and celebrated, I cannot refrain from inserting those parts of them which led to the measures that he either censures or approves.

FROM THE CHARACTER OF GEORGE GRENVILLE, ESQ.

With no small study of the detail, he did not seem to have his view at least equally carried to the whole circuit of affairs. He generally considered his objects in lights that were too detached. With a masculine understanding, a stout resolute heart, he had constant application, undissipated and unwearied. He took public business not as a duty which he was to fulfill, but as a pleasure he was to enjoy. If he was ambitious, it was an ambition of a noble and generous strain. It was to raise himself to a well-earned rank in parliament: not by the low pimping politics of a court, but to win his way to power through the laborious gradations of public service, and to secure to himself a well-earned rank in parliament,

by a thorough knowledge of its constitution, and a perfect practice in all its business. If such a man fell into errors, it must be from defects not intrinsic: they must be rather sought in the particular habits of his life, which, though they do not alter the groundwork of a character, tinge it with their own hue. He was bred in a profession:—he was bred to the law, which is, in my opinion, one of the first and noblest of human sciences; a science, that does more to quicken and invigorate the understanding than all the other kinds of learning put together: but it is not apt (except in persons very happily born) to open and liberalize the mind exactly in the same proportion. Passing from that study, he did not go very largely into the world, but plunged into business:—I mean the business of office, and the limited and fixed methods and forms established there. Much knowledge, no doubt, is to be had in that line; and there is no knowledge which is not valuable. But it may be truly said, that men, too much conversant in office, are rarely minds of re-

markable enlargement. Their habits of office are apt to give them a turn to think the substance of business not to be much more important than the forms by which it is to be conducted. These forms are adapted to ordinary occasions ; and therefore persons, who are nurtured in office, do admirably well as long as things continue in the *common order* ; but when the high roads are broken up, and the waters out ; when a new and troubled scene is opened, and the *office* affords no *precedent* : then it is that a greater knowledge of mankind and a far more extensive comprehension of things is required, than ever office gave, or office can ever give.

The ingenious and profound Stewart, in his ‘ Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind,’ quotes the latter part of this extract, to illustrate the insufficiency of mere experience, without theory, to qualify a man for new and untried situations in government. ‘ The observations,’ he remarks, ‘ Mr. Burke makes on this subject are ex-

pressed with his usual beauty and felicity of language ; and are of so general a nature, that, with some trifling alterations, they may be extended to all practical pursuits of life.

Mr. Grenville, Burke afterwards shews, considered revenue too exclusively ; and, from his eagerness to improve the finances, laid the foundation of much political evil to Britain.

In the character of Lord Rockingham Mr. Burke discovers very great address, as he had in Mr. Grenville's consummate ability. He does not dwell on the talents of his patron, but enters into the detail of his measures, and deduces them from patriotism and independence. He lays the principal stress on the qualities of that noble person's heart, as he was much more eminently distinguished for his integrity and virtuous intentions, than for his parts and knowledge.

The character of the illustrious Chatham is not altogether so distinctive and complete a picture as that of his friend, Mr. Grenville. Burke draws that great man no farther than he thinks necessary to account for his formation of the Ministry which succeeded Lord Rockingham's; but he gives a very striking description of the heterogeneous materials of that Administration. 'The State,' he says, 'was delivered into the hands of Lord Chatham—a great and celebrated name; a name that keeps the name of this country respectable in every other part of the globe. It may be truly called

*'Clarum et venerabile nomen,  
Gentibus, et multum nostræ quod proderat urbi.'*

'Sir, the venerable age of this great man, his merited rank, his superior eloquence, his splendid qualities, his eminent services, the vast space he fills in the eye of mankind, and, more than all the rest, his fall from power, which, like death, canonizes and sanctifies a great character, will not

suffer me to censure any part of his conduct. But what I do not presume to censure, I may have leave to lament. FOR A WISE MAN, HE SEEMED to me, at that time, to be GOVERNED TOO MUCH BY GENERAL MAXIMS. I speak with the freedom of history, and, I hope, without offence. One or two of these maxims, flowing from an opinion not the most indulgent to our unhappy species, and surely a little too general, led him into measures that were greatly mischievous to himself; and for that reason, among others, perhaps fatal to his country: measures, the effects of which, I am afraid, are for ever incurable. He made an Administration, so chequered and speckled; he put together a piece of joinery, so crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed; a cabinet so variously inlaid; such a piece of diversified mosaic; such a tessellated pavement without cement—here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white—patriots and courtiers; King's friends and republicans; Whigs and Tories; treacherous friends and open enemies;—that it was indeed a very

curious shew, but utterly unsafe to touch, and unsure to stand on. The colleagues whom he had assorted at the same boards stared at each other, and were obliged to ask, "Sir, your name?—Sir you have the advantage of me.—Mr. Such-a-one,—I beg a thousand pardons." I venture to say, it did so happen, that persons had a single office divided between them, who had never spoke to each other in their lives; until they found themselves, they knew not how, pigging together, heads and points, in the same truckle-bed.\*

The picture of Charles Townshend is just, discriminative, animated, and strong. He is drawn a man of great talents; but from an immoderate passion for fame, rather employing his abilities in supporting measures and principles most in vogue, than in devising or maintaining the wisest and

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\* The remark concerning maxims came with peculiar propriety from Burke, of whose wisdom it was a distinguishing characteristic, not to adopt any general principle *implicitly*, but to modify its application according to the diversity of circumstances.



most salutary. ' He worshipped,' said Burke, ' that goddess (Fame) wheresoever she appeared; but paid his particular devotion to her in her favourite habitation, in her chosen temple,—in the House of Commons. Perhaps there never arose a man in this country of a more pointed and finished wit, and (where his passions were not concerned) of a more refined, exquisite, and penetrating judgment. If he had not so great a stock, as some who flourished formerly, of knowledge long treasured up, he knew, by far better than any man I am acquainted with, how to bring together, within a short time, all that was necessary to establish, to illustrate, and to decorate that side of the question which he supported. He stated his matter skilfully and powerfully. He particularly excelled in the most luminous explanation and display of his subjects. His style of argument was neither trite and vulgar, nor subtile and abstruse. He hit the house between wind and water. Not being troubled with too anxious a zeal for any matter in question, he was never

more tedious and more earnest than the preconceived opinions and present temper of his hearers required, to whom he was always in perfect unison. He conformed exactly to the temper of the house ; and he seemed to guide, because he was always sure to follow. The effects of such a character, minding the *currency* and not the *weight* of opinions, Burke shews in the inconstancy of Townshend's political conduct. He voted for the Stamp Act while it was popular ; when it became disliked, he voted for the repeal : and when that repeal became unpopular, he voted for raising a revenue from America.

Of the characters, those of Mr. Townshend and Mr. Grenville appear to me the most highly finished : Townshend's, distinguished for truth and discrimination ; Grenville's, for truth, discrimination, and philosophy.

In speaking of the conduct of the North Ministry, he makes an observation, of which

the converse applies to himself: 'Never have the servants of the State looked at the whole of your complicated interests in one connected view: they have taken things by bits and scraps, just as they pressed, without any regard to their relations and dependencies: they never had any system, right or wrong; but only occasionally invented some miserable tale of the day; in order meanly to sneak out of difficulties, into which they had proudly strutted.' Burke himself, on the contrary, took the whole of a subject, and all its parts and dependencies, into consideration. Whenever he was right, his speeches contained a series of causes and effects, antecedents and consequents: they were chains of massy steel, at once strong and brilliant. Whenever he was wrong, he was systematically wrong; the parts were at least congruous. *Si non sunt vera saltem sunt inter se apta.*

Burke descanted with wonderful eloquence on the inconsistency of Ministry, in proposing, at the same time, addresses and re-

solutions declaring America in a state of rebellion, and conciliatory bills: acts repealing and coercive; soothing and irritating. 'You send out,' said he, 'an angel of peace, but you send out a destroying angel along with him; and what will be the effects of the conflict of these adverse spirits is what I dare not say—whether the lenient measures will cause passion to subside, or the severer increase its fury: all this is in the hands of Providence: yet now, even now, I should confide in the prevailing virtue and efficacious operation of lenity, though working in darkness and in chaos. In the midst of this unnatural and turbid combination, I should hope it might produce order and beauty in the end.'

The great mind of Burke most thoroughly despised mere courtiers, or, as he called them, household troops,—the parrots of court notions and court stories. 'Sir, this vermine of court reporters, when they are forced into day, upon one point, are sure to burrow in another; but they shall have no

refuge: I will make them bolt out of all their holes.' In the same speech, Burke manifests a feature in his character, long afterwards noticed by his very able opponent, Mr. Mackintosh:—'an abhorrence for abstract politics and a dread of innovation.' 'I am not,' says Burke, 'going into the distinction of rights, nor attempting to mark their boundaries. I do not enter into these metaphysical distinctions; I hate the very sound of them. Leave the Americans as they anciently stood, and these distinctions, born of our unhappy contest, will die along with it. They, and we, and their and our ancestors, have been happy under that system. *Oppose the ancient policy and practice of the empire as a rampart against the speculations of innovators, and they will stand on a manly and sure ground.*'

Whether we consider this speech of Burke as a display of the most creative genius, as an explanation of the subject in debate, as a chain of reasoning to prove propositions of the highest importance to the hearers

and their constituents, as antecedents from which the consequences he drew actually did proceed, or as affording motives which ought to have induced them to the conduct he recommended, it is one of the ablest orations to be met with in any language. Besides being replete with means adapted to the main end of conviction, and also of persuasion, were men always persuaded by a striking exhibition of their duty and interest, it has other distinguished excellencies : it displays a most penetrating and profound knowledge of human character and its effects : it abounds also in the soundest principles of morality. Transcendent excellence, logical, political, and philosophical, as this oration contains, embellished, enlivened, and elevated as it is by the most beautiful, animated, and grand imagery, which a POET'S genius could produce, a hypercritical rhetorician might probably discover some violations of the rules of *his* art. The rapidity of Burke's genius frequently produces a mixture of plain and figurative language, and also a confusion of figures, which a

slower mind, with an ordinary recollection of common-place precepts, would have avoided. 'Thus,' (says Burke, after having confuted vague reports circulated by court-hirelings) 'are blown away the insect-race of courtly falsehoods! Thus perish the miserable *inventions* of the wretched *runners* for a wretched cause, which they have *fly-blown* into every weak and rotten part of the country, in vain hopes that when their maggots had taken wing, their importunate buzzing might sound something like the public voice.' A rhetorician might probably tell us that the falsehoods are considered first metaphorically as insects, again literally as inventions, and immediately afterwards as insects, all in the same sentence. Critics of more intellectual expansion than verbal minuteness might reply, that the figure, whether rhetorically accurate or not, yet produces the intended effect of exciting contempt.

A second bill respecting American affairs was now proposed. From the disorders in

Massachuset's Bay, it was asserted by Ministers that the civil government of that province was inadequate to the remedy of the alledged defects : it was proposed to enact a law to deprive the lower House of Assembly of the privilege of electing the members of the council, and to vest that power in the Crown ; and also to vest in the King or Governor the appointment of magistrates and judges. This bill was vigorously opposed by many members. Burke contended that there was no evidence to justify such a deviation from the constitution of the colonies, and such an accession of power to the Crown. A third act was proposed for empowering the Governor, with advice of council, to send to Egland, to be tried, any person who, in the support of the revenue laws, or suppression of riots, should be charged with murder. We find no speech of Burke upon this bill. A fourth act was proposed for the government of Canada, to secure to the inhabitants the Roman Catholic religion, to its clergy the tithes, to supersede trial by jury, to re-



establish the French mode in its place, and to appoint a council dependent on the King's pleasure. This bill originated in the House of Lords. In opposing it in the House of Commons, Burke principally gave vent to his humour, in which, though he abounded, it seldom formed the leading characteristic of any of his speeches.

During the recess after this session, Burke received, at Beaconsfield, a visit from his friend Johnson. On viewing Burke's beautiful villa, he exclaimed, in the words of the exiled Mantuan to the restored Virgil,

*' Non equidem in video miror magis.'*

Although these two great men had frequently political disputes in town, here there was no altercation. The polite host refrained from subjects of contention. The guest had so much breeding as to abstain from unprovoked attacks, in his own house, on a man of the most engaging hospitality. Mr. and Mrs. Burke exerted themselves to please their illustrious visitor, whom Mr. Burke venerated for kindred genius, and his lady, because so prized by her husband ;

and so effectually studied his pleasure, that he declared he never passed his time with so much delight and instruction. Indeed, the sole conversation of each other must have been, to those eminent personages, a treat which they seldom experienced. In town they often met, but though generally in company respectable for talents and knowledge, far inferior to themselves.

Burke's attention to the sage did not prevent him from betowing every mark of polite attention on his other guests. He, as a landlord, exercised that hospitality which is the result of good sense and good dispositions, polished by an extensive intercourse with the politest society; dividing his attention to his different guests, and drawing every one of them to converse on the subjects with which he knew them best acquainted. Mrs. Thrale, who might very probably construe the politeness of Burke into an admiration of those talents and acquirements with which she herself and many others believed her to be endowed, declares

it was a most delightful party. Burke made his guests pleased with themselves, with each other, and consequently with their entertainer. Although his fulness could not avoid venting itself, yet did he manage his conversation so as not to mortify others by a sense of their inferiority, or overbear them with his powers. They felt they were delighted, and knew they were instructed by the discourse, without being drawn to a humiliating comparison with the speaker. He never brought his strength to a comparative trial, unless provoked by an attack, nor indeed always then.

Mrs. Thrale, who has been more careful in marking the defects of her friend's manners than the perfections of his understanding, the former being, probably, more within the reach of her observation than the latter, mentions a strange compliment paid by Johnson to Burke at parting. The general election called them all different ways. Mr. Burke being to set out for Bristol, to stand candidate, for which he

had been invited by a great majority of the electors—Johnson, taking him by the hand, said, ‘ Farewell, my dear Sir! and remember that I wish you all the success which *ought* to be wished you, which *can possibly* be wished you by an *bonest man*;’ words containing an insinuation not very polite to his kind host. Burke took no notice of that mark of his friend’s breeding. Though the high church bigotry of Johnson made him an enemy to the politics of a philosophical Whig, yet he continued uniformly a friend to Burke; and the praises of Edmund was one of his favourite themes. As he launched out one day at Streatham on his merits, an Irish trader present was so delighted to hear his countryman so praised by one whom he heard to be the wisest man in England, said to the Doctor, ‘ give me leave to tell you something of Mr. Burke’ He began—  
 ‘ Mr. Burke went to see the collieries in a distant province; and he would go down, Sir, into the bowels of the earth (in a bag), and he would examine every thing: he went in a bag, Sir, and ventured his life for

knowledge; but he took care of his clothes, that they should not be spoiled, for he went down in a bag.' 'Well, Sir,' said Johnson, good humour'dly, 'if our friend Mund should die in any of these hazardous exploits, you and I would write his life and panegyric together; and your chapter of it should be entitled thus—' *Burke in a bag.*'

This year Johnson and Burke lost their friend Goldsmith, whom they both loved and regarded; his merits much overbalancing his foibles and defects. Dr. Johnson wrote the Latin epitaph, which is so well known.

The club had now considerably increased its numbers, and received several members destined to act a conspicuous part on the great political stage, whom I shall mention when I come to their performance on that theatre. A party of eleven gentlemen dined one day at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, all, except Sir William Forbes, acquainted with Goldsmith; all men of great respectability, some of them of literary eminence short only of

Johnson's, and one equal to the sage. The conversation turned on Johnson's epitaph, and various alterations and corrections were suggested. But the question was who should have the courage to propose them to the author. At last it was resolved that there could be no way so good as that of a *Round Robin*.

Dr. Barnard, now Bishop of Limerick, drew up an address to Johnson on the occasion, which, it was feared by the rest, the Doctor might think treated the subject with too much levity. Burke then proposed the address as it stands in the *Round Robin*, and Sir William Forbes officiated as clerk.\*

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*Round Robin addressed to Samuel Johnson,  
L.L.D. drawn up by Edmund Burke.*

' We, the circumscribers,† having read with great pleasure an intended Epitaph

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\* Boswell's Life of Johnson.

† The Robin was written within a circle, formed by the names of Edmund Burke, Thomas Franklin, Anthony Cha-

for the Monument of Dr. Goldsmith ; which, considered abstractly, appears to be, for elegant composition and masterly style, in every respect worthy of the pen of its learned author ; are yet of opinion, that the character of the deceased as a writer, particularly as a poet, is perhaps not delineated with all the exactness which Dr. Johnson is capable of giving it. We therefore, with deference to his superior judgment, humbly request that he would, at least, take the trouble of revising it ; and of making such additions and alterations as he shall think proper, upon a farther perusal. But if we might venture to express our wishes, they would lead us to request that he would write the epitaph in English, rather than in Latin ; as we think that the memory of so eminent an English writer ought to be perpetuated in the language to which his works are likely to be so lasting an ornament ;

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mier, G. Colman, Will. Vaskell, Joshua Reynolds, William Forbes, T. Barnard, R. B. Sheridan, P. Metcalfe, E. Gibbon, Joseph Warton.

which we also know to have been the opinion of the late Doctor himself.

Sir Joshua agreed to carry it to Dr. Johnson, who received it with great good humour; and desired Sir Joshua to tell the gentlemen that he would alter the epitaph in any manner they pleased as to the sense of it; *but he would never consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey with an English epitaph*: and observing Dr. Warton's name among the circumscribers, said to Sir Joshua, 'I wonder that Joe Warton, a scholar by profession, should be such a fool.' The epitaph, as first written by Johnson, is engraved on Goldsmith's monument without any alteration.

Mr. Boswell very justly remarks, that 'this hasty composition is one of the many instances which evince the extraordinary promptitude of Burke, who, whilst he was equal to the greatest things, can adorn the least; can with equal facility embrace the vast and complicated speculations of politics,



or the ingenious topics of literary investigation.' This anecdote also shews the veneration some very eminent men, and even Burke himself, entertained for Johnson. Indeed the request is expressed with much more humility than was necessary. They must be excessive admirers of Johnson, who would think so humble a style due to him from several of the signers ; or that would suppose that any thing short of perfect equality was requisite, even to Samuel Johnson, from Edmund Burke. Such instances of humble address justify the observation of Dr. Robertson to Boswell, respecting the deportment of his intimates to Dr. Johnson : ' You worship and spoil him among you. He is certainly a man of very great powers of conversation, an able philosophical critic, and a masterly moral essayist : but in other respects not beyond other men. He has many weaknesses, and will believe any thing against the Dissenters and for the church of England.' Dr. Robertson probably thought that, as a political writer, Johnson did not display that superiority

which he shewed in moral reflections and in criticism.

Burke's speech on *American taxation* was now published, and greatly increased, through the nation, the praise of his wonderful talents. Not those only who coincided in his political sentiments, but the most strenuous abettors of the plans of Administration allowed its uncommon excellency.

The eloquence of Burke has been frequently compared to that of Cicero. There is, no doubt, a general resemblance between two of the most learned men and greatest orators of the most learned and eloquent ages and countries. Both are men of extraordinary genius: both had acquired an uncommon share of the knowledge of their respective times, and especially of the knowledge most necessary for political disquisition and eloquent orations: both are completely informed on the subjects which they undertake to discuss; both reason with great force and dexterity, arguing closely or loosely,

directly or circuitously, as best answered their purpose.

We may consider these two great orators, in point of materials, disposition, language, and the purposes to which their respective eloquence was directed. The different circumstances of the times necessarily produced a very considerable difference in the materials of their eloquence. The extent and complication of modern politics required a proportionate comprehension and variety of materials from the British senator, which the more simple relations of ancient politics did not require from the Roman. Besides more multifarious detail, the philosophy of politics is now much farther advanced than in the time of Cicero. There is much more of generalization in politics, as in all subjects. To compose eloquent orations, in the age of Cicero, required neither the same extent and multiplicity of knowledge, nor enlargement of views, as in the age of Burke. On the other hand, it now requires less ability to procure multiplicity of know-

ledge; because, in fact, there is much more to be attained; and less native vigour of mind to generalize, because habits of generalization are common. Cicero's most distinguished orations were judicial, a species of oratory requiring not so wide a compass of materials as deliberative; even the questions of deliberation among the Romans, who were merely a nation of warriors and conquerors, with little commerce, intrigue, and little variety of relation to foreign states; hardly indeed any other than those which proceeded from command. Their situation afforded less variety of deliberative matter than the Grecian republics, and much less than England.

The principal deliberative oration of Cicero, as far as I can recollect, is that (*pro lege Manilia*) on the expediency of appointing Pompey to succeed Lucullus, with extraordinary powers. This speech turned, first, on the comparative merit of the two generals, as it was easy for the Romans to conquer Mithridates, if they had able com-

manders, desirous of terminating the war. Secondly, on the personal character of Pompey, as likely to be affected by unlimited authority. The facts ascertaining the merits of the two leaders were not difficult to collect, as they were recent in every one's memory. The character of Pompey was well known; and for Cicero's purposes, the chief object was exaggeration. Cicero certainly gives his materials that order and direction which was most likely to procure the recall of Lucullus and the appointment of Pompey. But on perusing the oration *pro lege Manilia*, and Burke's speech on American taxation, and estimating them by the true criterion of speeches on momentous business, the quantity of important, particular, and general truth, of information and instruction, which they contain, it appears to me that the stores of Burke's mind, as exhibited in this speech, are greater than those of Cicero. If we take all Cicero's speeches and all Burke's, and compare them in the degree of knowledge and wisdom which they convey, I think few would hesi-

tate to say, that a reader might become more knowing and wiser by Burke's than by Cicero's. Much of this, however, arises from causes not peculiar to Burke, but appertaining to this age and country. The reasoning of Cicero is frequently very acute, and generally very ingenious; but his arguments not rarely are taken from common-place topics, sources so much recommended by ancient rhetoricians, but reprobated by the moderns. Indeed these common-place ideas were much better calculated to answer the particular purpose of their inventors, the Grecian sophists, to speak plausibly on any subject, than the general purpose of a wise orator, to impress on the hearers important truths, and to prompt them to beneficial conduct. With many excellent arguments, resulting from a close consideration of the subject, Cicero often mixes those that are suggested by the rhetorical precepts in vogue. Burke's reasoning is derived never from common-place topics, but always from the most minute and extensive view of the subject, in all its relations, and scientific

knowledge of the general principles applicable to the questions in discussion, with the modifications arising from the particular circumstances of the case. Mixed with very great intellectual force, there is, in Cicero's argumentative materials, much of that rhetorical art, the knowledge and application of which requires no extraordinary power of understanding:—Burke's argumentative materials derive little aid from rhetorical art. Both shew an understanding *capable of investigating* hidden truths:—Burke had *actually investigated* more than Cicero.

Another species of materials that tends to illustrate truth, and embellish eloquence, is imagery. In imagery, Burke is much more copious and variegated than Cicero. Superior copiousness, however, of imagery does not necessarily imply superior fertility of imagination: the power of combination being equal, he will most easily combine who has the most copious materials. If there be two men of equal powers of imagination, and the one knows history and ethics,

the other history and ethics equally well, and physics besides, the latter may have with ease more abundant imagery than the former. The sources of imagery are more numerous to the moderns, because knowledge is greater. But when we particularly examine the imagery of Cicero and of Burke, we find Burke's to be much more abundant, not only from the stores of modern discovery and practice, but from those of external and moral nature, known in the time of Cicero, and at all times. Hence we may fairly infer that the imagination of Burke was naturally more fertile than that of Cicero. In the imagery, as well as the arguments of Cicero, an attentive reader will find more of rhetorical art than in Burke's. Cicero deals more in antithesis, climax, interrogation,—the productions of study: Burke, in metaphor, personification, apostrophe,—the effusions of genius. Burke not only abounds in serious imagery, but in those combinations which constitute wit: in wit, Cicero seldom succeeds, but frequently descends to puns. Wit, indeed, in general bears a greater pro-



portion to the intellectual exertions of our countrymen than to those of the Romans. In humour, both the orators are very happy, though both are sometimes very coarse. In the pathetic, Cicero's orations abound more frequently than Burke's. Cicero's perorations are highly wrought up, especially in his harangues to the people. Indeed it is to such audiences that pathos is properly used: to informed British gentlemen it would be absurd to speak to their feelings, but through their understandings. When Burke is pathetic, his pathos equals that of Cicero, or any orator.

Both Cicero and Burke abound in the purest morality, though the former frequently, and the latter sometimes, defended men by no means moral in their conduct. Cicero's speeches were filled with egotism, a defect from which Burke's are exempt: Burke's with ebullitions of rage, which are seldom found in Cicero's.

In the disposition of their materials, both shew great judgment and skill, though

Cicero displays more art, and a more regular attention to *rhbetorical rules for the conduct of a discourse*. In their exordiums, both have a great degree of insinuation ; both tend to prepossess their hearers : but Cicero's introductions are generally more laboured than Burke's. The narrative part of Cicero's orations is no doubt very excellent, clear, concise, yet full ; omitting nothing important, and seldom introducing any thing extraneous : they are the well told statements of an able lawyer. Burke's narratives are also extremely clear on the whole, and distinct in their several parts. His subjects generally require a greater compass of narration than Cicero's : they comprehend larger portions of time, more variety of events, and greater intricacy of relations. He excels in detailing particulars, in marking the principal epochs, in classing his subjects according to their respective relations, and in shewing causes and effects. His narratives are the abridged histories of a philosophical historian.

In the management of arguments, Burke may perhaps be esteemed less regular than Cicero: his narrative and argumentative parts are often blended. Cicero is more methodical, and arranges his arguments in a more connected series, so that the one may support the other. From Cicero's arrangement, a reader may *sooner* comprehend the whole of his reasoning, than from Burke's the whole of his reasoning: and in that particular Cicero is, no doubt, superior to Burke. It may be said, that the hearers of Cicero not being so well informed and enlightened men as those of Burke, the most exact and luminous order was absolutely necessary to convey the arguments with effect to their minds: whereas, Burke's hearers, if the arguments were intrinsically good, could perceive their force, though not arranged with the greatest art, and in the closest connection. It may also be alledged, that Cicero himself is less scrupulously attentive to lucid order, in his speeches against Catiline, and other orations to the senate, than in that for Manilius's bill, and other harangues to the

people. But as even the ablest and most learned men, though they can comprehend arguments, independently of their disposition, yet can more quickly comprehend them if connected than detached, Cicero's arrangement is better than Burke's. In some of his principal speeches, Burke's disposition is as regular as that of Cicero.

Language also appears to have occupied a greater proportion of Cicero's attention than of Burke's; his words and phrases are nicely chosen, his sentences are dexterously turned, his style is harmonious, elegant, and splendid: Burke's language is chiefly eminent for clearness, propriety, copiousness, and force; he does not particularly study musical cadence in the structure of his periods: his style is highly adorned, but his ornaments are the ornaments of genius, not of rhetoric; not of the body, but of the soul of his discourse. On the whole, the mechanism of composition was evidently more studied by Cicero than by Burke. Cicero aims so much at beauty and magnificence,

as sometimes to impair his strength: for smoothness and harmony he is not unfrequently indebted to enervation. Very great attention to rhetoric is seldom united with masculine strength and profound philosophy. In the flowing numbers of Isocrates we rarely meet the force of Demosthenes. Perhaps in none of his writings does Cicero shew more the uncommon vigour of his understanding; his complete knowledge of human nature; his intimate acquaintance with the laws and constitution of his country, with its politics during that momentous æra; his comprehension of the general characters and particular views of the celebrated actors during the last scene of the republic, than in his letters: compositions containing the most valuable information, most acute and energetic reasoning, without any of his oratorical pomp of language. They are the plain strong sense of a most able man, writing upon important business. Cicero was certainly a man not only of the greatest penetration and vigour, but also of very profound philosophy and expanded wisdom.

His treatises on the most important subjects of philosophy, on the religious, civil, social, and political relations and duties of man, have little ornament of style: the language is merely perspicuous, precise, and strong. The expression of Cicero's letters and philosophical disquisitions is more the expression of wisdom than that of his orations.

In their speeches, Burke's obvious end is to impress on you his views of the subject: Cicero's not only to impress on you his views of the subject, but to strike you with an admiration of the orator. Burke tries to inform, convince, please, and persuade the hearer: Cicero to inform, convince, please, affect, and persuade the hearer; and at the same time to shew him how well the speaker can speak. In many of his speeches, the display of his powers seems to have been his principal object: in his defence of Milo it must have been his sole purpose, because, in fact, it was never spoken.

From the diversity of circumstances, much similarity in materials neither did, nor indeed could, exist between these or any British and Roman orators. In the conduct of their speeches there might have been likeness; but in fact we do not find very much. In his performances of unadorned information and instruction, Cicero resembles the narratives and ratiocination of Burke, more than in his ornamented eloquence; even in these the likeness is not special. Where conviction is the sole object, they agree in using plain language, as the best adapted for that purpose. Being both men of extraordinary wisdom, they, upon practical subjects, argue as ALL MEN OF TRUE WISDOM ARGUE,—*from experience, and not from metaphysical distinction.* They were both first-rate speakers, according to the circumstances of their respective situations and countries: but their compositions were no more particularly like than those of Hume and Fergusson to those of Tacitus; of Robertson or of Gibbon to Livy's; because the four Britons resembled

the two Romans in the general circumstance of being the first historians of their nation. Men of such genius as Cicero and Burke rarely descend to imitation. Johnson being asked if Edmund Burke resembled Tullius Cicero—‘ No, Sir, he resembles Edmund Burke.’

A considerable party of merchants and tradesmen of Bristol, chiefly Dissenters, admiring the eloquence of Burke, and looking upon him, from his political conduct, as strenuously attached to civil and religious liberty, named him a candidate for their city. He was gone to Malton, a Yorkshire borough, under the influence of the Marquis of Rockingham; and was actually chosen, when a deputation arrived to request him to stand for Bristol. With the consent of his new constituents, he complied. There were already three candidates; Lord Clare and Mr. Brickdale, the late members; and Mr. Cruger, an American merchant. Burke, when he first appeared on the hustings, made a very eloquent and impressive speech, ad-



mirably adapted to the hearers. He enlarged upon the immense advantages of commerce, and shewed himself thoroughly acquainted with its branches, objects, and principles; and accurately informed respecting the trade of Bristol. At the conclusion of the poll he displayed still more captivating eloquence. He and Mr. Cruger were elected.

Mr. M'Cormick says, 'that notwithstanding his panegerics on trade, Burke really did not respect the character of a merchant; and quotes a passage from one of his speeches to shew Burke's opinion: 'Do not talk to me,' said he, 'of the liberality and patriotism of a merchant; his god is his gold; his country his invoice; his desk his altar; his ledger his bible; his church his exchange; and he has faith in none but his banker.' Mr. M'Cormick thinks that such an opinion of the mercantile profession is incompatible with sincerity in the praises of trade. But, it by no means follows, that a conviction of the utility of an employment

must be accompanied with a conviction of the great abilities or great virtue necessary to exercise that employment. Burke, though he did not, and indeed could not, think either extraordinary talents or extraordinary goodness necessary to form a merchant, thought well of the mercantile character, modified by the circumstances, manners, and sentiments of this country. The tendency of great conversancy with money has so much relation to the abilities and knowledge of the person so conversant, that it would be difficult to make it the subject of a general rule. It certainly increases the natural contraction of narrow understandings; but often expands great minds: it leads them to form projects of extensive utility, by having the means in their view and power. Commerce, probably, like other objects of thought, has a tendency to expand or contract, according to its mode. In its petty details, it, no doubt, must contract the understanding; but enlarges it in its general schemes, the result of extensive information,

calculation of probabilities, and accurate and acute investigation. We find also that it often liberalizes conduct. In no nation do men apply themselves so readily and powerfully to the assistance and relief of their fellow men, as in the country in which commerce is most prevalent. By no set of men is service better recompensed than by British merchants.

The idea that Burke thought meanly of merchants probably originated from the opinion he entertained of stock-jobbers, and other gamblers, contractors, Indian depredators, and all those who suddenly amassed great fortunes by fraud and speculation, instead of gradually saving money by industry, œconomy, and skill.

Burke's colleague, Cruger, was, it would appear, a man of no very copious eloquence. It is even reported, that after Burke had delivered one of his best speeches at Bristol, Cruger rose up, and exclaimed, ' I say *ditto* to Mr. Burke—I say *ditto* to Mr. Burke.'

The new parliament now met, and, probably, no age or country ever shewed a greater assemblage of talents.

On the side of Government, among many men of parts and knowledge, were ranged—  
 Germaine, distinguished for closeness, correctness, and neatness; Jenkinson, for industry, commercial and political information; Dundas, for strong understanding, sticking to the point, and expeditious dispatch of difficult business; Wedderburne, eminent for acuteness, versatility, and ingenuity; Lord North, equally remarkable for pleasing variegated wit, humour, classical taste, and knowledge, as for dexterity of argument and readiness of reply; Thurlow, surpassing all his coadjutors in decision and masculine strength.

On the side of Opposition there was the patriotism and solidity of Dempster and Saville; the industry and colonial information of Pownall; the colloquial pleasantry, the vivacity, and classical erudition of Wilkes; the animated declamation of Barré, the

quick apprehension, commercial and political knowledge of Johnstone; the constitutional principles, legal precision, readiness, acuteness, and vigour of Dunning: the extensive, accurate, and multifarious knowledge; the brilliant, variegated, and grand imagery; the luminous illustration; the rapid invention; the clear, strong, diversified, abundant reasoning; the comprehensive and expanded philosophy of Burke.

A personage was now rising to the first rank, in the first assembly in the world, who must have held a very exalted situation in any assembly of statesmen and orators that it ever contained.—Charles James Fox, the second son of Henry, afterwards Lord Holland, by Lady Georgina, sister to the Duke of Richmond, was born January 24th, 1749. His father soon perceived the superiority of his intellectual powers, and spared no pains on his education. Mr. Fox made it a rule, in the tuition of his children, to follow and regulate, but not to restrain nature. At table, Charles, when a boy, was permitted to

enter into the conversation of men, and acquitted himself to the astonishment of all present. Perhaps the early habit of thinking with freedom, and speaking with readiness, may have contributed to that *prompt exertion* of his great talents, which makes a considerable part of his senatorial excellence. Perhaps it, on the other hand, conduced to the hasty consideration which he not unfrequently bestows on a subject; and from which he views it too cursorily, without employing his powers in investigating and probing it to the bottom. His father's indulgence to his favourite Charles sometimes led the youth to petulance. One day, Lady Georgina saying something on a subject of Roman history, which Charles perceived to be erroneous, he immediately asked, with much contempt, what she knew about the Romans? and with more knowledge and force of argument, than filial reverence, he demonstrated her error:—nor did his father chide his forwardness. When Mr. Fox was Secretary of State, young Charles used to read his dispatches; and when not ten years

of age, one day told his father that a paper, which he had just read, was too feeble, and threw it into the fire. The Secretary made out another copy, without the slightest reprimand. Most parents would agree in thinking that the father's indulgence, even to Charles Fox, was excessive. Few, very few, can have an opportunity of ascertaining its effects on SUCH A SUBJECT.

When fourteen years of age, his father, just created Lord Holland, carried Charles to Spa, and allowed him five guineas a night for a Pharo-bank, an allowance which probably generated his propensity to gaming.

At Eton, Charles's literary acquirements were far beyond those of his contemporaries, although several of them were excellent scholars. His attainments were not the effects of habitual application, but of the occasional exercise of extraordinary powers. He very early discovered a strong bias to pleasure and dissipation. This inclination was increased by his father, who lavishly

supplied him with such sums as invited extravagance. The profusion of young Fox was unbounded, and long before he was of age he had expended most enormous sums.

At Oxford, his talents and learning created admiration and even astonishment. Although his time seemed devoted to gaming, and every other species of dissipation, he excelled all of his standing in literary acquirements: he was a profound classical scholar: he read Aristotle's Ethics and Politics with considerable ease. His favourite authors were Demosthenes and Homer.\*

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\* He has retained through life his knowledge of the Greek language, and is still particularly conversant with Homer. He can discuss the works of the bard, not only as a man of exquisite taste, and as a philosophical critic, which from such a mind might be expected, but as a grammarian. No professed philologist can more accurately know the phraseology and versification of the poet. One day, a clergyman, eminent for knowledge of the Greek language, was attempting to prove that a verse in one of the books of the Illiad was not genuine, because it contained measures not used by Homer. Mr. Fox instantly recited twenty other verses of the same measure, to shew that deviation from the usual feet did not imply interpolation.



History, ethics, and politics, were his favourite studies ; and he seems early to have considered himself as destined to be a senator and a statesman. He staid but a short time at Oxford, made the tour of Europe ; and though he plunged into every excess into which the pleasurable regions of the South allure Britons in the hey-day of youth, he acquired an extensive and profound knowledge of the constitution, laws, government, nature, arts, and manners of the several countries which he visited. He, like Alcibiades, surpassed all of his age in the force and versatility of his genius, and in the intemperance of his conduct.

In the twentieth year of his age he procured a seat in Parliament ; and, young as he was, distinguished himself among the

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He, indeed, could converse with a Longinus, on Homer's beauty, sublimity, and pathetic ; with an Aristotle, on his exhibitions of man ; and with a pedagogue, on his dialects, his dactyls, spondees, and anapaests. Such is the rapidity with which Fox darts into a subject, that he can meet men of the greatest knowledge, on at least equal terms, on their peculiar studies,

many eminent men then in the House of Commons. He was bred a Tory; but rather a political than a high-church Tory. Indeed I have never heard that at any period of his life Mr. Fox was charged with theological bigotry. At first he took the side of Administration, and was thought one of its ablest supporters; in so much, that he attracted the notice of Junius, who saw the *bloom* of talents destined to ripen into the most exquisite and valuable fruit. The facility with which he made himself master of a new question, and comprehended the strength, weakness, and tendency of a proposition or measure; his forcible argumentation, his readiness of the most appropriate, significant, and energetic language, soon rendered him conspicuous: his daily and obvious improvement shewed that his talents had not then nearly reached the pinnacle at which they were to arrive.

Mr. Fox's parliamentary exertions, from their commencement till his abandonment of Lord North, may be considered as the first

EPOCH of his oratorical and political history. We see in him vast capacity ; but hitherto more capacity than fulness. We observe strong pointed reasoning ; but not that variety and abundance of profound observations and just conclusions which the same mind, embracing more extensive and manifold knowledge, afterwards exhibited. He himself has declared, that he learned more from Mr. Burke than from all others. Even if he had not made that declaration, it would be very probable that he derived great benefit from intercourse with such a man as Burke : that the power of rapid acquirement would be successfully exerted, when there was within its reach such a multiplicity of the most valuable stores. It is evident that, from the beginning of his connection with Burke, his speeches, in a very short time, displayed much greater copiousness of matter and enlargement of political views. From that period also he often expatiated much more than formerly from the question at issue, directing his arguments fully as much against the measures, conduct, and character

of the Minister and his coadjutors in the lump, as for or against the specific proposition brought forward.

Fox's parliamentary efforts, during the American war, formed a *second* EPOCH in his oratorical and political history, when first-rate powers had abundant materials.

Mr. Fox had first been a Lord of the Admiralty ; afterwards a Lord of the Treasury : but, opposing Government, in 1774, was dismissed. He had, some time before, begun to associate with several members of Opposition ; and had been, by the sympathy of genius, attracted to Burke. Lord North had repeatedly represented to him the suspicions to which his association with opposers of Government gave rise. ' If,' said he, ' we see a woman frequently coming out of a bagnio, we cannot swear she is not virtuous ; yet we should judge of her from her company.' Finding that, notwithstanding his expostulations, Charles still associated with the same gentlemen, Lord North pro-

cured his dismissal, very abruptly, from office. Fox, although in his disposition candid, liberal, and of the most expanded benevolence, yet, in his temper, feeling and irritable, was filled with resentment at the mode of his dismissal, which he imputed to Lord North ; and from that time became a most strenuous and formidable opponent of the Minister. From this period we are to date Charles James Fox's conversion to Whiggism. Far am I from imputing his change of principle to that change in his situation. His intimacy with Mr. Burke, probably, had great influence in the formation of the political creed which he *then* admitted. One of the principal features in Fox's character is openness. In every part of his public conduct, and, indeed, of his private, boldness and decision have been prominent. Whether the ends which he pursued were useful or hurtful, there was no artifice, no petty intrigue, no duplicity in the means : whether all was *fair* or not, at least, all was *above board*. Such a character was totally unfit for the tricks and supple-

ness of a mere courtier. The greatness of his mind was as incompatible with the frivolity of court etiquette, as his openness with the duplicity of court artifice.

The proceedings respecting America opened a wide field of opposition. Although Fox attacked the measures of Administration in general, yet the principal butt of his eloquence was the NOBLE LORD IN THE BLUE RIBBON.

Fox, perfectly master of every kind and mode of argument, true and sophistical, close and loose, modelled his reasonings according to those of his principal opponent. Lord North, though a very ready, and, indeed, a very able reasoner, was by no means close. His arguments, though generally sufficiently logical, had not mathematical gradation and connection. He did not keep one object before him, and move directly towards it, without deviating to the right or left. He was diffuse and expatiatory. Fox, like one of those great generals who could

readily adopt the tactics best fitted for those of an opposing general, in his speeches against Lord North expatiated into a very wide field. The closeness of a future opponent has since lessened his expatiation, and by contracting its direction, strengthened his eloquence, as I shall afterwards have occasion to mention. Fox, during the American war, was a more informed and more energetic speaker than before; and now is a more informed, more compacted, more energetic speaker than during his political campaigns against Lord North, though still often too expatiatory.

Among many extraordinary excellencies in the eloquence of Fox is his power of simplification. However intricate or complicated a subject may be, he unravels and unfolds it so perfectly as to make it intelligible to the most ordinary hearer. He strips Truth of every dress, that, from either artifice or negligence, might conceal her real form; and displays her naked nerves and sinews. Like Demosthenes, the excellence of his

speeches consists in essentials; in clearly stating important facts, in adducing and impressing forcible arguments. His orations are addressed almost exclusively to the understanding. In imagery he frequently deals; but his are the images of illustration more than of embellishment. Like Demosthenes, he can call in humour and wit; but they are called in as auxiliaries, and not suffered to act as principals. So extensive and variegated is his knowledge, that he overcomes professional men, not only in the principles, (for that, in such a man as Fox, would not be surprising) but in the technical details of their peculiar knowledge. His arrangement is evidently not studied; thoughts rise so rapidly in his mind that it would be impossible for him to adhere to any preconceived order. His disposition is, however, the result of a mind that is comprehensive, as well as rapid and energetic; it is sufficiently luminous to convey to his hearers the different parts and relations of the most complicated subjects. His style is that which a powerful understanding, and



a thorough knowledge of the language, without any affectation, produces. He courts neither elegance nor harmony ; but is not deficient in those secondary qualities. The primary qualities of language, clearness, force, and appropriation, characterize his speeches. Without rhetorical flourishes and gaudy ornaments, his language is merely a vehicle of feeling and thought.

American affairs occupied the principal attention of Ministry and Opposition during the session of 1774. In all the colonies the landing of the tea had been resisted ; so that all shared in the criminality for which the port of Boston had been blocked. The Bostonians, on hearing of the resolutions of the British Parliament, were at first alarmed ; but on finding that their neighbours were resolved to support them, became more firm and determined in their opposition to the mother country. The assembly of Virginia set the example of making the cause of Boston a common cause of the colonies. They represented the parliamentary mea-

asures as in truth an attack on all the colonies, and as of a tendency destructive to the rights and liberties of all, unless effectually resisted. To inflame the minds of the people, they appointed the first of June, the day on which the bill was to commence, as a day of fast and humiliation, 'to implore the Divine interposition to avert the heavy calamity which threatened destruction to their civil rights, with the evils of civil war, and to give one heart and mind to the people, firmly to oppose every injury to the American rights.' The other colonies coinciding in sentiment, and adopting the measures of Massachuset and Virginia, committees of correspondence were established between the several provinces, and a plan was proposed for holding a general congress to deliberate on such measures as the common interest of America might require.

The congress was held at Philadelphia, consisting of delegates chosen from all the other colonies, except Georgia. Although the colonies were not all equally violent in

every particular, they all agreed in condemning the Boston-port bill, the consequent laws respecting Massachusetts Bay, and in denying the right of Britain to tax the colonies. They published a declaration on the state of the affairs in Massachusetts, declaring their approbation of the conduct of the Bostonians, recommending perseverance in the plan of conduct they had hitherto pursued, and contributions to compensate for the evils they had already suffered from their spirit of resistance. They published also a petition to the King, an address to the People of Great Britain, and an address to the Colonies, all breathing the same spirit of repugnance to the authority of Parliament ; also a declaration of rights and grievances, claiming, as a most important privilege, the exclusive power of legislating for themselves in all cases whatsoever.

These were the resolutions made public ; but it appeared, from the measures adopted in the several colonies, after the breaking up of the congress, that hostilities were already

proposed. Arms and warlike stores were openly provided, and resistance to the mother country, by open force, became the subject of common conversation. The Americans also entered into an association, to suffer no trade, import or export, with Britain, or any of her possessions, until the obnoxious laws should be repealed, and the right of taxation renounced. Such were the consequences of the Boston-port bill, and the subsequent measures of the British legislature; consequences very different from the expectations of the Ministry, but fulfilling the predictions of Burke.

While these things were going on in America, great apprehensions were entertained in Britain, by merchants trading to the colonies, of the effects which the disputes would produce to commerce. Petitions were laid before Parliament by several bodies of traders, representing the great losses they had already sustained from the suspension of traffic with America, the immense sums that were owing them from that

quarter, and the ruin that must accrue to them, unless intercourse should be again opened with the colonies.

Among the trading and manufacturing towns which had been affected by the American disputes, Birmingham was one of those which felt them most severely, and had most anxiously petitioned the House to take their case into consideration. The petition was ably supported by Mr. Burke, but unsuccessfully. The petitioners expressed their gratitude in the following letter :

TO EDMUND BUKKE, ESQ.

SIR,

*Birmingham, Feb. 8, 1775.*

*' The merchants and manufacturers having a principal share in the American trade from this town and neighbourhood, beg your acceptance, through our hands, of their warmest acknowledgements for your liberal support of our petition to the Honourable House of Commons, wherein are stated the evils we already feel, and the greater we have yet to apprehend, from a con-*

*tinued stagnation of so important a branch of our commerce as that with North America.*

*‘ At the same time we also unite in expressing our particular thanks for the motion\* you was pleased to make for an enquiry into the manner of both the late petitions from the town of Birmingham having been obtained; an enquiry which scarcely could have failed to give some useful intelligence, and to have fully justified our application to Parliament at so critical a juncture.*

*‘ We cannot wonder, Sir, that defamation should have made its appearance on such an occasion as this, which is the notorious evidence of a weak cause, and whose mischiefs, we are persuaded, will be as transient as its efforts were intemperate. We only take the liberty, therefore, of adding our sincere wishes, that you may fill your distinguished place in the British senate, and that your persevering endeavours to preserve the*

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*\* From Birmingham a petition, agreeably to the views of Ministry, had been presented to the House. Burke moved an inquiry might be made concerning the two petitions, to ascertain which spoke the sense of the people.*

rights of the subject, to maintain the prosperity of our commerce, and to secure the tranquillity of this extensive empire, may meet with a success adequate to the patriotic zeal with which they are animated. Being, with the greatest regard,

Sir,

Your most obliged,

And obedient Servants,

S. FRITH,	T. WILKINSON,	T. MARTIN,
J. KETTLE,	J. RICHARDS,	G. RUSSEL,
T. TWIGG,	J. SMITH,	J. WELCH,
W. RUSSEL,	W. WELCH,	T. BINGHAM,
R. RABNER,	J. RICHARDS,	J. WAIFORD,

To the petitions the Minister and his friends paid no great attention ; determined to persist in the plan of taxing America, they disregarded every consideration adduced to shew its impolicy.

An address was voted to his Majesty, declaring America to be in a state of rebellion. It was followed by several resolutions, declaratory of a determination to coerce. Burke made a stand at every post, with his able phalanx ; but was overpowered by

numbers. The petitions of the various bodies of merchants were referred to a committee, which Burke called a committee of oblivion. A petition was presented by the American agents, the chief of whom was the great Franklin, from the American Congress to the King, and referred by his Majesty to the House. Franklin and his brother agents requested to be heard in support of the petition. Burke exerted his eloquence to procure them a hearing, but in vain.

While the Ministry were pursuing every measure that could tend to alienate the colonies, they professed to wish for conciliation. Lord North moved, that when any of the colonies should offer, according to their abilities, to raise, under the authority of its assembly, the due proportion for the common defence, and for the support of civil government, Parliament should forbear taxing that province. The object of this proposition was evidently to detach some of the provinces from the combination :—it was a half measure, an attempt to compromise the



difference, when it was plain, from the very beginning, that there was no medium between coercion and abandonment. If the Ministry were before right, they conceded by far too much ; if wrong, too little. This fluctuation of counsels, this mixture of soothing and irritating measures, had uniformly marked the administration of Lord North, and as uniformly been unsuccessful. Burke's comprehensive wisdom objected to the present resolution as insufficient, and his sagacity foresaw that it would be ineffectual. The event justified his predictions: the Congress rejected the proposition as only a proffered suspension of the mode, not a renunciation of the right, of levying taxes.

That venerable statesman, who, in the vigour of his age, had carried the glory of his country to a height unknown in the annals of British history, now, in the decline of life, and oppressed with distemper, made an effort to prevent a war between the parent state and her colonies. The piercing eye of Chatham saw the danger, with all the

probable circumstances which would accompany it, and the consequences that would follow: in dissensions with America he perceived the seeds of foreign war. 'France and Spain,' said he, 'are watching your conduct, and waiting for the maturity of your errors.' To ward off such evils, the wise patriot proposed to cut up the root from which they were likely to spring, and to conciliate America, by placing her on exactly the same footing on which she had stood before the introduction of the new system.

He supported his motion by a force of reasoning and eloquence not unworthy of the days of his own greatest energy. His attempt was unavailing: his motion was rejected by a great majority.

Burke was, meanwhile, employed in making the most minute and extensive inquiries into the physical and moral state of America, from all those who, from situation and ability, were qualified to give him the

most complete information and justest views. He had been some years before appointed agent for New York, and maintained a close intercourse with many of the colonists, and also with the American agents in London, especially with Dr. Franklin. From all that he could learn or judge, he formed the conclusion, that an attempt to subjugate the colonies would be impracticable: conciliation, therefore, he still persisted to recommend.

March 22, 1775, he laid before the House thirteen resolutions for reconciliation. Waving the discussion of right, he confined himself to expediency. He proceeded upon a principle admitted by the wisest legislators, that government must be adapted to the nature and situation of the people for whose benefit it is exercised. Instead of recurring to abstract ideas of the rights of man, he considered the circumstances, modes of thinking, dispositions, and principles of action of those men in particular, the treatment of whom was the subject of deliberation.

He proposed that the Americans should tax themselves by their own representatives, in their own assemblies, agreeably to the former usage, and to the analogy of the British constitution; and that all acts imposing duties should be repealed. 'Peace,' he observes, 'implies reconciliation; and where there has been a mutual dispute, reconciliation always implies concession on some side.' He considers first *whether Britain ought to concede*; and after establishing, by the strongest arguments, the wisdom of concession, he next proceeds to inquire *what concession she ought to make*. On the first question, guided by the rule of legislative policy that I have above stated, he takes one of those wide ranges in which his expansive understanding so much excelled. As, in the speech on American taxation, he had presented a complete history of the policy of this country respecting the colonies; in this he considers the internal state of America, physical, moral, religious, and political. His reasoning for conciliation, even at the expence of concession, is taken

from two great sources,—the advantages which had accrued, and would continue to accrue, to this country from their rapidly increasing prosperity, if we were on amicable terms: and, from their power of resistance, if we should attempt force, he surveys the population of the colonies, their agriculture, and commerce.

Here he shews the amazing versatility of his powers, and the industry with which he mastered the most minute and intricate details. To display the great increase of the commerce of America, he gave *a comparative statement of the export trade to the colonies in 1704 and in 1772; and a comparative statement of the export trade to the colonies in 1772, and to the whole world in 1704*: demonstrating, from acknowledged vouchers, that the trade to America in 1772 amounted to 6,024,171*l.* and in 1704, to 569,930*l.* and consequently had risen in the proportion of eleven to one. He also shews that the trade to the colonies in 1772 was in the proportion of twelve to thirteen of the trade to the whole world in

1704, which was 6,509,000<sup>l</sup>. This detail he applies to prove the vast commercial importance of the colonies to Britain.

The increase was so rapid, that sagacity would not have anticipated it as probable, in the usual course of events. 'It happened within sixty-eight years, within the period of the life of man; in the remembrance of men still alive, and who in 1704 were of sufficient age to be acquainted with the commerce of their country.' These could hardly have believed it possible, that in their lifetime the trade of Britain with America should come to equal that which there was, then, with the whole world. Here his imagination soared to a very grand poetical vision. 'My Lord Bathurst\* might re-

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\* That enlightened, benevolent, and engaging man was then above ninety. His health was so firm and vigorous, that he used to sit up to enjoy the pleasures of social conversation for several hours after his son. The Lord Chancellor's more delicate temperament obliged him to go to bed. After Lord Apsley's departure for the night, the venerable peer used to call for the other bottle, and say, 'come, my friends, let us young men drink to the repose of the old gentleman that has left us.'

member all the stages of the progress. He was in 1704 of an age, at least, to be made to comprehend such things. He was then old enough, *acta parentum jam legere, et quæ sit, poterit cognoscere virtus*. Suppose, Sir, that the Angel of this auspicious youth, foreseeing the many virtues, which made him one of the most amiable as he is one of the most fortunate men of his age, had opened to him in vision, that, when, in the fourth generation, the third Prince of the House of Brunswick had sat twelve years on the throne of that nation, which (by the happy issue of moderate and healing counsels) was to be made Great Britain, he should see his son, Lord Chancellor of England, turn back the current of hereditary dignity to its fountain, and raise him to an higher rank of peerage, whilst he enriched the family with a new one. If, amidst these bright and happy scenes of domestic honour and prosperity, that Angel should have drawn up the curtain, and unfolded the rising glories of his country, and whilst he was gazing with admiration on the then

commercial grandeur of England, the Genius should point out to him a little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the national interest, a small seminal principle rather than a formed body, and should tell him—Young man, there is America, which at this day serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men and uncouth manners; yet shall, before you taste of death, shew itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world. Whatever England has been growing to by a progressive increase of improvement, brought in by varieties of people, by succession of civilizing settlements, in a series of seventeen hundred years; you shall see as much added to her by America in the course of a single life!—If this state of his had been foretold to him, would it not require all the sanguine credulity of youth, and all the fervid glow of enthusiasm, to make him believe it? Fortunate man, he has lived to see it! Fortunate indeed, if he lives to see nothing that shall vary the prospect, and cloud the setting of this day!



He proceeds to the agriculture and fisheries of the colonies, details their flourishing state, draws a general conclusion of the value of America ; and argues that force is by no means an effectual mode of securing to Britain so valuable a possession.

He next enters into the character of the Americans, their spirit of liberty ; arising, first, from descent : ‘ The people of the colonies are *descended of Englishmen*. England, Sir, is a nation which, I hope, still respects, and formerly adored, her freedom. The colonists emigrated from you when this part of their character was predominant ; and they took this bias and direction the moment they parted from your hands. They are therefore not only devoted to liberty, but to liberty according to English ideas and on English principles.’ From thence, he says, the Americans inferred, that they must possess the power of granting their own money. ‘ From England the colonies draw, as with their life-blood, these ideas and principles.’ In the opinion which they, as the descen-

dants of free Englishmen, entertain, they were confirmed by the form of their provincial legislative assemblies allowed by Britain. ' Their governments were in the highest degree popular.'

He proceeds to shew the influence of their religion (that is, among the northern colonies, where the inhabitants were principally Protestant dissenters) in nourishing the spirit of liberty. ' If,' says he, ' any thing were wanting to this necessary operation of the form of government, religion would have given it the complete effect: religion, always a principle of energy in this new people, is no way worn out or impaired; and their mode of professing it is also one main cause of this free spirit. The people are Protestants; and of that kind, which is the most adverse to all implicit submission of mind and opinion. This is a persuasion not only favourable to liberty, but built upon it. I do not think, Sir, that the reason of this averseness, in the dissenting churches, from all that looks like absolute govern-

ment, is so much to be sought in their religious tenets as in their history. Every one knows, that the Roman Catholic religion is at least coeval with most of the governments where it prevails ; that it has generally gone hand in hand with them, and received great favour, and every kind of support, from authority. The church of England, too, was formed, from her cradle, under the nursing care of regular government. But the dissenting interests have sprung up in direct opposition to all the ordinary powers of the world, and could justify that opposition only on a strong claim to natural liberty. Their very existence depended on the powerful and unremitting assertion of that claim. All protestantism, even the most cold and passive, is a sort of dissent. But the religion most prevalent in our northern colonies is a refinement on the principle of resistance ; it is the diffidence of dissent, and the protestantism of the Protestant religion. This religion, under a variety of denominations, agreeing in nothing but in the communion of the spirit of

liberty, is predominant in most of the northern provinces. The colonists left England when this spirit was high ; and in the emigrants highest of all.' The manners of the southern provinces, he contends, have the same effect with the religion of the northern. Here he makes a very ingenious and profound observation ; that in whatever country, of which the bulk of the people is free, and yet there are many slaves, domestic or predial, the spirit of liberty is more high and haughty, than in those countries in which there are no human beings in that state of degradation. This remark is justified by the history of Greece and Rome. In all the provinces, he shews that the mode of education, and the remoteness from enslaved nations, increases their love of freedom.

The spirit of liberty being from a multiplicity of causes, some physical, and most of them moral, very strong, he argued, that it must be treated in one of three ways : it must either be changed, as inconvenient, by removing its causes ; prosecuted, as criminal ;

or, thirdly, be complied with, as necessary. One means proposed by the friends of Government for repressing the power of America, was to withhold future grants of land, and so check population. The futility of this project he demonstrated: the people, he said, had already occupied much land without grants, and even if Britain had force to drive them from some parts, they would occupy others: ‘ they would soon forget a government by which they were disowned; would become hordes of English Tartars, and, pouring down on your unfortified frontiers a fierce and irresistible cavalry, become masters of your governors and counsellors, your collectors and controllers, and of all the slaves that adhered to them. Such would, and, in no long time, must be, the effect of attempting to forbid as a crime, and to suppress as an evil, the command and blessing of Providence—“ Increase and multiply.” Such would be the happy result of an endeavour to keep, as a lair of wild beasts, that earth which God, by an express charter, has given to the

children of men. To impoverish the colonies in general, and in particular to arrest the noble course of their marine enterprises, would not be so impracticable.' 'But', says he, 'we have colonies for no purpose but to be serviceable to us; it seems preposterous to make them unserviceable, in order to keep them obedient.' He contends that the temper and character of the colonies are unalterable by any human art. 'But let us,' proceeds he, 'suppose all these moral difficulties got over. The ocean remains. You cannot pump this dry; and as long as it continues in its present bed, so long all the causes which weaken authority by distance will continue. "Ye Gods, annihilate but space and time, and make two lovers happy!" was a pious and passionate prayer; but just as reasonable as many of the serious wishes of very grave and solemn politicians.'

The second mode of breaking the stubborn spirit of the Americans, by prosecuting it as criminal, he exposes as impossible in

the execution, and consequently absurd in the attempt. 'I,' says he, 'do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people.' He went on to other effects which might be expected from perseverance in an endeavour which the colonies would resist. From a contest with America he predicted that there would ensue a rupture with European powers, and a general war. After adducing every argument that genius, informed by knowledge, and guided by wisdom, could invent to incline Britain to conciliation, even at the expence of concession, he proceeds to consider what this country ought to concede. His general principle is, that to conciliate, we should rescind all the acts which had tended to alienate America. He illustrates, by a very accurate narrative, the operation of the several laws, and examines the arguments by which they had been supported in Parliament; shews the futility of the reasoning and the contrariety of the effects to its anticipations. Wisdom is simple in her process, she judges of the future from the past.

The sum of Burke's reasoning, from his complete history, is this: ' By your old mode of treating the colonies, they were well affected to you, and you derived from them immense and rapidly increasing advantage: by your new mode they are ill-affected to you; you have obstructed and prevented the emolument. I recommend to you to return from the measures by which you now lose, to those by which you formerly gained.'

' I do not examine, whether the giving away a man's money be a power excepted and reserved out of the general trust of government; and how far all mankind, in all forms of polity, are entitled to an exercise of that right by the charter of nature. Or whether, on the contrary, a right of taxation is necessarily involved in the general principle of legislation, and inseparable from the ordinary supreme power. These are deep questions, where great names militate against each other; where reason is perplexed; and an appeal to authorities only



thickens the confusion. For high and reverend authorities lift up their heads on both sides ; and there is no sure footing in the middle. This point is the *great Serbonian bog, betwixt Damietta and Mount Casius old, where armies whole have sunk*. I do not intend to be overwhelmed in that bog, though in such respectable company. The question with me is, not whether you have a right to render your people miserable ; but whether it is not your interest to make them happy ? It is not what a lawyer tells me, I *may* do ; but what humanity, reason, and justice, tell me, I *ought* to do.'

In many of Burke's speeches imagination occupies a great share ; passion in not a few. This is the speech of calm wisdom, drawing from the most extensive information the most salutary conclusions, and recommending the most beneficial conduct. From the speech on American taxation, combined with this, a reader may derive more acquaintance with the history and impolicy of our contest with America, than from any

other publication ; he will see the facts and the reasonings in close connection, so as to form one great chain.

This oration, that on taxing America, and indeed every production of Burke, shew the absurdity of the opinion of the author of the Memoirs, that Burke seldom spoke to the understanding. His discourses and writings convey more of united information and instruction than are to be found in those of any orator or statesman whose speeches have been published. There are, no doubt, orators whose orations are directed as closely to the point at issue ; but where are there any which exhibit such a multiplicity of knowledge, and so profound acquaintance with human nature, intellectual, moral, religious, social, civil, and political ? From what senator's speeches can there be formed such a system of wise and practical ethics as may be deduced from his ? I may be wrong in this opinion ; but until it be proved that there have been or are speeches containing equally extensive and multiform

knowledge; equally profound philosophy; equally momentous and beneficial instruction, I am justified in concluding myself to be in the right. I have perused the orations of Cicero, of Demosthenes, of Fox, of both the Pitts, Mansfield, and other eminent orators; and though I think that each of them is equal to Burke in several constituents of eloquence, yet none of them, extraordinary as each of them is for genius and oratorical powers, communicate to the reader and hearer so great a quantity of new and important, particular and general truths.

From the terms in which Burke speaks of the principles of the dissenters and the American spirit of liberty, it has been asserted that he was more favourable to dissenters than to the church, and had conceived republican ideas of freedom. This opinion (if it be really an opinion, and not merely pretended to be so, in order to charge him with inconsistency) is maintained on passages taken from this speech more

than on any other grounds. But if we impartially examine what he says of both the spirit of religion and liberty among the Americans, we find that he does not PRAISE either : he only states their existence, and describes their effects. They were very powerful moral causes of the repugnance of the Americans to submit to British legislation. It is on that account that he shews their nature and operation. He does not represent them as objects of approbation, but as motives to a certain conduct. He does not say the principles of the dissenters are better than those of the church, or the republican spirit of American freedom is more agreeable to the rights of man than the more moderate spirit of English freedom : he says the dissenters of America are inspired with a strong spirit of liberty, which, with other causes, render them unyielding to British authority. The difficulty of coercing men so inspired is great, and, with their physical advantages, probably unsurmountable ; or if surmountable, with an expence and

loss beyond the value of the object: the attempt, therefore, is unwise; and instead of it he proposes conciliation.

Happy had it been for this nation, happy for mankind, if his opinions, doctrines, and plans had been reduced to practice! His propositions were negatived by a great majority: *pauci ac ferme optimus Hannoni assenserunt; sed ut plerumque fit, optimos plurimi vicerunt.*

Mrs. Piozzi, in her *Anecdotes of Johnson*, tells us, that when she ventured, even before the Doctor himself, to applaud with rapture the passage in the speech concerning Lord Bathurst and the Angel, the Doctor said, ‘ had I been in the house, I would have answered it thus:

‘ Suppose, Mr. Speaker, that to Wharton, or to Marlborough, or to any of the eminent Whigs of the last age, the Devil had, not with any great impropriety, consented to appear, he would perhaps in somewhat

like these words have commenced the conversation :

“ You seem, my Lord, to be concerned at the judicious apprehension, that while you are sapping the foundations of royalty at home, and propagating here the dangerous doctrine of resistance, the distance of America may secure its inhabitants from your arts, though active : but I will unfold to you the gay prospects of futurity. This people, now so innocent and harmless, shall draw the sword against their mother country, and bathe its point in the blood of their benefactors. This people, now contented with a little, shall then refuse to spare what they themselves confess they could not miss ; and these men, now so honest and so grateful, shall, in return for peace and for protection, fee their vile agents in the house of parliament, there to sow the seeds of sedition, and propagate confusion, perplexity, and pain. Be not dispirited, then, at the contemplation of their present happy state. I promise you

that anarchy, poverty, and death shall be my care, be carried even across the spacious Atlantic, and settle in America itself, the sure consequences of our beloved whiggism."

If this parody be correctly transcribed by Mr. Piozzi, I cannot help thinking it inferior to the usual productions of the sage. It is also less able than the passage it is intended to ridicule. Burke's Angel, the advocate of whiggism, by holding forth the amazing increase of prosperity that was to follow its predominancy, describes what was to take place under that free government which good spirits approve. Johnson's Devil is a Tory in his heart. The Devil calls the doctrine of resistance dangerous; terms opposition to acts, which Whigs thought oppressive, sedition; and the defenders of the oppressed the vile agents of sedition. Though the Devil, therefore, professes to love whiggism, he speaks the language of a Tory. The Devil is also out in point of history. The principles of liberty, which *Satan calls dangerous*, existed in Ame-

rica long before the time of Wharton and Marlborough. Johnson was so bigotted a Tory, that he makes even the Devil himself the reviler of whiggism.

About this time Dr. Johnson published his pamphlet, entitled ‘ Taxation no Tyranny,’ which may be in many respects considered as an answer to Burke’s celebrated speech on taxing America. The high-church bigotry, which frequently sent a cloud over the bright mind of the illustrious sage, prevented his political essays from having that superlative excellence which marks his criticisms and ethics. His views on subjects of government are partial, and want that enlarged comprehensiveness which distinguishes his other writings. The usual perspicacity of his mind seems dimmed by the prejudices of education. His reasoning not only wants his general expansion, but his general acuteness and precision. Indeed, wherever politics interfered, his estimates of truth, conduct, and character, appear erroneous. What but the perversion of pre-



judice could abominate William, the deliverer of this country, regard the contemptible weakness of the priest-ridden James, or praise the abandoned, unprincipled profligate, his brother?—a prince, who evidently considered subjects in no other light, than as men whose industry and property were to be lavished in affording him the means of gross debauchery.

This pamphlet of Johnson partook of the prejudice which could ascribe great merit to Charles II. He sets out with assuming a position as an axiom, which is not only not self-evident, but not true, taken absolutely ; true only with certain modifications:—*That the supreme power of every community has the right of requiring from all its subjects such contributions as are necessary to the public safety or public prosperity.* By the British constitution, the supreme power of the community has not the right of levying contributions from its subjects, *as subjects*, but as members of an established society, delegating to individuals, chosen by themselves, the power

of levying contributions. The agent assesses for the general interest, by permission of the employer; the employer acquiesces, when he finds that general interest to be the object, and marks his judgment of the exercise of the delegated power by the continuance or discontinuance of the agent, when the specified term of the trust is expired. By the British constitution, consent of the taxee, immediate or mediate, is necessary to constitute a legitimate tax. Johnson considers Britain and America as sovereign and subject, not as different members of a free state, held together by and for mutual interest; and as members of a free state, suffering partial restraint for general good, for their own good, and not the good of others exclusive of theirs. In order to ridicule the resistance of America, Johnson supposes Cornwall to resolve to separate itself from the rest of England, and to refuse to submit to an English Parliament; holding a congress at Truro, and publishing resolutions similar to those of the Americans. 'Would not such a declaration ap-

pear to come from madmen?' The cases are not analogous: Cornwall is fully represented in Parliament, consequently could not have that reason for resisting our legislature. If we were to suppose Parliament absurd and wicked enough to make laws depriving Cornwall of the most valuable privileges of Britons, without any demerit, the Cornishmen would have a right to resist that act, because oppressive, unconstitutional, and unjust. As to the expediency of exerting the right of resistance, the case would be very different between Cornwall and America; Cornwall being both much weaker and much nearer than the colonies. It is impossible that the wisdom of Johnson could have meant this pretended analogy for reasoning men. It might pass with mere *courtiers*, but would not convince *statesmen*, even though prepossessed in favour of the cause. Its flimsiness a Dundas, a North, a Thurlow, a Wedderburne, and a Mansfield, would perceive as clearly as a Shelburne, a Camden, a Chatham, a Fox, or a Burke. Johnson considered the subjugation of Ame-

rica, if it persevered in resistance, as certain ; not reflecting on the energetic spirit which inspires men fighting for what either is, or they think, liberty. His predictions respecting the Americans proved false.

In his political writings we find too much adherence to generalities, to be practically beneficial. With the most powerful mind, habituated to abstraction, he reasons on politics more as an able schoolman than as an able statesman. Burke, with an equally strong understanding, as much accustomed to generalization, in reasoning on conduct enters into a much more particular consideration of the actual cases, in all their circumstances.

In a conversation between Johnson and others, Burke delivered his opinion on the effects of parliamentary eloquence. Sir Joshua Reynolds said, ' Mr. Burke, I do not mean to flatter, but when posterity reads one of your speeches in Parliament, it will be difficult to believe that you took so

much pains, knowing with certainty that it could produce no effect, that not one vote would be gained by it.' 'Waving,' replied Burke, 'your compliment to me, I shall say in general, that it is very well worth while for a man to speak well in Parliament. One who has vanity speaks to display his talents; and if a man speaks well, he gradually establishes a certain reputation and consequence in the general opinion, which sooner or later will have its political reward. Besides, though not one vote be gained, a good speech has its effect. Though an act which has been ably opposed passes into a law, yet, in its progress, it is modelled, it is softened in such a manner, that we plainly see the Minister has been told that the members attached to him are so sensible of its injustice or absurdity, from what they have heard, that its must be altered. The House of Commons is a mixed body, I except the minority, which I hold to be pure, (smiling) but I take the whole house: it is a mass by no means pure; but neither is it wholly corrupt, though there is in it a large

proportion of corruption: there are many members, who generally go with the Minister, who will not go all lengths. There are many honest well-meaning country gentlemen, who are in Parliament only to keep up the consequence of their families. Upon most of these a good speech will have influence. The majority, indeed, will always follow where they are led.'

*Quo clamor vocat et turba faventium.*

Some one speaking of place-hunters, Burke proceeded, ' Taking your metaphor, you know that in hunting, few are so desperate as to follow without reserve ; some do not chuse to leap ditches and hedges, and risk their necks, gallop over steep precipices, or dirty themselves in bogs and mires.' Burke, on the same occasion, delivered his opinion concerning emigration. ' We hear prodigious complaints at present of emigration. I am convinced that emigration makes a country more populous. Exportation of men, as of any other commodities, makes more be produced. Leave breeders,

and you will have more people than if there were no emigration.' Johnson observed, 'there will be more people if there are more breeders. Thirty cows in good pasture will produce more calves than ten cows, provided they have good bulls.' Burke answered, 'there are bulls enough in Ireland.'

The club had now received great accessions of genius and literature. Mr. Gibbon, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Fox, became members. Fox was generally silent in the company of Johnson. That could not proceed from fear even of his talents. Who was, or is, the man whose powers Charles Fox need fear? His taciturnity, probably, proceeded from a desire of information and instruction, which a young man, of equal abilities, might reap from the knowledge and experience of the old sage. Gibbon did not distinguish himself in the club: he disliked Johnson, and did not enter freely into conversation when he was present. This dislike was, perhaps, partly owing to the very great difference of their theological tenets; and

as, with all his talents and learning, he had a considerable share of vanity, probably in some degree to mortification at the superiority which, he must have been conscious, Johnson and some more of the members possessed over even a Gibbon. Johnson, besides, undervalued that species of literary effort in which Gibbon excelled, and had declared in his company that the greater part of what was called history was nothing but conjecture. Boswell says, that Johnson had talked with disgust concerning Gibbon's face, and that the philosopher resented the attack on his beauty; but Boswell seems inclined to impute to him frivolous or bad motives. It is, however, certain that, whatever might be the cause, Gibbon was reserved in the club; and abstained from intellectual contests. What he said was rather epigrammatic and sarcastic than replete with the ability and learning which his great literary monument has displayed.

It was Johnson who proposed Mr. Sheridan to be a member, saying, when he re-



commended him, ‘ he who has written the best comedies of the age must be a considerable man.’ Boswell considers the admission to the club as an honour to Sheridan. It certainly was a society in which there were several men of high eminence, and three to whom it would be difficult to find three equals : but it could not be reckoned a high honour to Sheridan to belong to a literary meeting, of which James Boswell was deemed worthy to be a member.

Burke, one evening at the club, speaking of the deanery of *Fern*, which was then vacant, said it must be *barren*, and that he believed there would be a contest for it between Dr. HEATH and Dr. MOSS. Speaking of livings in general, ‘ by this,’ he said, ‘ that Horace describes a good manor’—

*Est modus in rebus sunt certi denique fines :*

Which he translated, ‘ There is a modus in the tythes and fixed fines.’ He met, one day, with a young gentleman from Ireland, of better parts and birth than fortune, who

was describing, with no little indignation, the purse-proud arrogance of some Scotch merchant, who had, he said, made a great deal of money by dealing in *kelp*, and looked down on gentlemen much his superiors in family and accomplishments. ‘Ay,’ replied Burke, ‘he thinks,

*Et genus et virtus nisi cum re vilior alga est.*

Boswell, who seems to have thought that the doctrines of imputed merit extended to associates in civil life, as well as to matters of religious faith, and was very anxious to be in parties of distinguished men, formed a plan of bringing Johnson into a company in which Wilkes, whom the Doctor detested as impious and seditious, was to dine. Boswell, after surmounting very formidable obstacles, was successful; and the polite attentions of Wilkes conciliated Johnson. Boswell details the attentions with his usual minuteness; he dwells particularly on the assiduity with which the wit helped the sage to roast veal, and the éloquence with which he recommended stuffing, butter,

and lemons, with a peroration on savoury fat and brown. Boswell afterwards narrated to Burke the history preliminary to this dinner, and unfolded his own efforts and difficulties in effectuating the important interview. He describes the opposition made by the Doctor's housekeeper to his dining abroad; his own embassy to that personage, and the persuasive oratory by which he prevailed on her to consent; his throbbing exultation when the wise man called for a clean shirt; and finally, the completion of his joy, when he got the object of his adoration into a hackney coach. Boswell records that Burke gave him much credit for this very able and successful negotiation; and said, that there was nothing equal to it in the whole history of the *corps diplomatique*. The politeness and benevolence of Burke would not mortify inoffensive vanity, or repress well-meaning officiousness. Boswell thought the remark a very high compliment. Indeed he had a very happy disposition to be pleased with praises which many others would have disliked as ironical.

In America hostilities were now commenced. It had frequently been asserted in Parliament that the colonists were cowards. One gentleman declared that with three thousand men he could over-run America. This opinion was also very generally received out of the house. Hardly was there to be met a half-pay officer, who did not, at his village club, declare, that with two or three regiments he HIMSELF could subdue America. Burke, who knew the human mind, general history as well as the particular state, sentiments, and dispositions of the Americans, and could infer motive and action from situation and character, entertained a far different opinion; an opinion which the first battle between the British and provincial troops tended to confirm. Although the colonists were defeated at Bunker's-hill, they lost fewer men than the British. Besides the valour of men fighting in what they conceived to be the cause of their own liberty, they had acquired great dexterity in the use of arms, and were excellent marksmen. The Ame-

ricans made a successful inroad into Canada, and penetrated as far as Quebec.

The British Ministry not having foreseen so vigorous a resistance, had not made the preparations which coercive measures were found to require. . Indeed it does not appear that they had been at pains, proportionate to the importance of the object, to attain full information on the dispositions and resources of the colonies : therefore, although we should admit the justice and even the expediency of the measures of Administration, we cannot give them much credit for the wisdom of their plans and vigour of their efforts at the commencement of the rupture. . Perceiving, from the successes of the Americans, that the present force was very inadequate to the purposes of coercion, they resolved to open the following campaign with a much more powerful armament.

The Congress sent Mr. Penn and Mr. Lee to London, to represent ' the injustice sustained from the new system of statutes and

regulations ; to state that they had been forced to take up arms in their own defence ; to deprecate the farther effusion of blood ; and to pray that his Majesty would adopt some mode for the repeal of the hurtful acts.' A petition to this purport was signed by John Hancock, the president, and all the members of the Congress. It was delivered to Lord Dartmouth, Secretary of State. Soon afterwards the deputies were informed that no answer would be given.

The Parliament opened with a speech, declaring the necessity of coercion. An address was proposed, echoing as usual the speech, to which a very able opposition was made. Burke, besides going over the grounds of injustice and inexpediency, demonstrated, that the Ministers were either very deficient in point of information, or in faithful reports to Parliament. They had, he said, given false accounts, representing dissatisfaction as confined to Boston, although it was well known to impartial enquirers that it had pervaded the colonies.

He had himself repeatedly asserted, that the discontent was generally prevalent: the event had proved him to be right. Ministers, he argued, were either weak, in adopting momentous measures, or inadequate in information, or wicked in concealing the knowledge they possessed; and in either case unworthy of being trusted any longer with the conduct of affairs. He entered into a very minute recapitulation of the boasts of Ministry, and contrasted them, with very severe humour, with the actual performance.

Fox, on the same occasion, poured forth a torrent of his powerful eloquence. In the plain, forcible language which forms one of the many excellencies of his speeches, he shewed what ought to have been done, what Ministers said would be done, and what was done. ‘ Lord Chatham,’ he said, ‘ the King of Prussia, nay, Alexander the Great, never gained more in one campaign than Lord North lost: *he has lost a whole continent.*’ His sagacious mind, at the com-

mencement of the war, foresaw the event. Fox perceived, and predicted, that men fighting for their liberty would be ultimately successful. He tried to dissuade his country from war, foreboding discomfiture and distress from such a contest. The admonitions of this great man were disregarded. His country hearkened not to his warning voice. The actual disaster and consequent calamity far exceeded the anticipation of even Fox's foresight.

November 16th, 1775, Burke brought forward a new conciliatory bill. In his two celebrated speeches of the preceding session, and the session before that, he had grounded his propositions of amity upon the *mutual* INTERESTS of the mother country and the colonies. The ground of his present motion was the RIGHT of *subjects of this realm* to grant or withhold all taxes, as recognized by the great financial statute passed in the reign of Edward I.—*statutum de tallagio non concedendo*. On this statute, he observed,



rested the *security of property* from arbitrary invasion: a security which constituted one of the most striking differences between Britain and absolute governments. He demonstrated the impracticability of the American subjects of Britain enjoying this privilege by representation in Parliament, on account of the immense distance; and, therefore, that to be on an equal footing with other British subjects, they should be taxed by their own assemblies. Edward, one of the wisest and most vigorous sovereigns that ever sate upon the throne of England, had, on a dispute about taxation breaking out between him and his people, agreed to this law rather than continue the contest, so hurtful to both parties. In describing the character of Edward, he drew the line between the firmness of wisdom and the obstinacy of folly. 'Wisdom pursued her ends no longer than she found them to be attainable and salutary. Folly, unable to distinguish, and filled with conceit, often continued to seek objects, merely because

she had once done so.' Burke proposed a bill, in the spirit of that famous statute, to renounce the future exercise of taxation, without discussing the abstract question of right, to repeal all the laws complained of by the colonies, and to pass an immediate amnesty. From the petition of the Congress, the evidence of Mr. Penn, and many others, he inferred, that the bill would satisfy America. The speech was esteemed by both parties a most finished piece of eloquence; and, as well as the two other orations, and indeed most of the writings of Burke, shewed the ignorance and folly of those who assert, that Burke rarely speaks to the understanding, and chiefly to the imagination. It embraced every consideration of justice and expediency, dehortatory of war and commendatory of peace. The views of Burke, on both the right and the prudence of the proceedings of Government, from the commencement of the contest to this last effort to prevent children and parents embroiling their hands in the blood of each other, had been the same. 'It is

impolitic to provoke to a separation from the mother-country colonies which contribute so largely to its wealth and prosperity. It is inconsistent with the constitution of Britain that any subject should be taxed but by himself or his representatives. Such, from a concurrence of causes, is the disposition of the Americans, that they will resist whatever they conceive to be oppression. If recourse be had to the sword, the conquest of America, at such a distance, in a country so intersected by rivers, entangled by woods, and fortified by mountains, its inhabitants inspired by the love of liberty, will be difficult, if not impracticable. Should it be at all possible, it must be with an immense effusion of blood and treasure; after America is so exhausted as to be unable to afford any indemnification. Our European rivals will watch the opportunity of intestine dissensions, and we shall be involved in a general war. These were the predictions of wisdom—

HEU NON CREDITA TEUCRIS!

To whatever subject Burke turned his thoughts, he looked before, behind, and about him :

*αμα προσω και οπισω*

*Λευσσει, σπως ο'χ' αριστα μετ' αμφοτεροις γενηται.*

‘ Turns on all hands his deep discerning eyes ;

‘ Sees what befel, and what may yet befall ;

‘ Concludes from both, and best provides for all.’

Burke was not a man of ephemeral expedients, but of permanent plans. He not only saw what was actually the case, but what was the cause, and what was or would be the effect. The Minister talked of pacific assurances from foreign powers. The little details of diplomatique intrigue were not the grounds on which Burke formed his conclusions. He viewed human nature, and could from situation infer objects and passion, motive and action. He concluded that an opportunity of humbling a powerful and triumphant rival would not be slipt while such passions as pride and ambition existed. He knew history in detail, but studied it in principle. From considering the conduct

of France in her relations of peace, neutrality, alliance, and war, with different powers of Europe, he could find the main spring of her policy. He saw ambition to be her ruling motive; that her enmity was in proportion to the obstacles, to the gratification of her ambition, that while extension of territory was her principal object, the house of Austria had been the chief butt of her enmity, that from the time that territory and superiority came to be considered as necessary to her naval, Britain had been her principal enemy. For near a century this our country had been indirectly her most formidable opponent by land, and directly her conqueror by sea. Britain had been the soul of every confederacy that had repressed her ambition; and in the preceding war had obtained a superiority unprecedented in former contests. The great naval power of England she beheld with jealousy, envy, resentment, and terror. She would rejoice at an internal contest which would employ great part of the British force, and enable her, and her

dependent, Spain, to attack her triumphant rival with considerable probability of success. From these considerations, Burke concluded that a war with France and Spain would be a certain consequence of our perseverance in attempting to coerce America, and adduced that apprehension as a forcible collateral argument to assist his direct reasoning in favour of conciliation. Thus did this illustrious senator, from the commencement of the dispute with the colonies, and during its progress, until it ripened into civil war, direct the full force of his extraordinary knowledge and powers to avert and prevent the rupture. If it would have been better for this country to have avoided war with her colonies, then was she indebted to the efforts of Burke in endeavouring to preserve peace. If the events not only in general, but in a great measure in detail, were such as he predicted, then must we give much praise to his sagacity and wisdom. If we acknowledge that the loss from the contest overbalanced the gain; if we admit that our advantage was not equi-

valent to myriads of men slain and to one hundred millions of debt incurred, we must allow that it would have been fortunate for Britain if she had followed the counsels of Burke. When we consider the CONSEQUENCES of the American war, not merely immediately as affecting Britain, in the waste of men and money, in the incumbrances entailed on posterity, and the increased price of every article of convenience, and even of necessity; but as affecting France, and through her Europe in general, and Britain in particular; that but for the revolution in America, the revolution in France probably either would not so soon have taken place, or would have been much less democratical, and in the natural course less turbulent and despotical to herself, and dangerous and hurtful to her neighbours, we must wish that Government had followed the often repeated advice of Edmund Burke.

It has been frequently asserted, that the violence of Opposition stimulated the Ame-

ricans to commence resistance, and encouraged its continuance: that, therefore, first, the American war, and next, its bad success, was owing to the opponents of Government in this country, and above all to the ablest, most persevering, and constant of those opponents—to Shelburne, Chatham, Dunning, Fox, and Burke.

If our proceedings were originally unjust and unconstitutional, then were these senators right in their opposition. But to suppose that their abilities and eloquence caused the successful resistance of America, is supposing a cause, which, in the usual operation of moral causes as known from experience, was very inadequate to the effect. How the speeches of those at the distance of several thousand miles could enable men to make a successful stand against great armies, it is difficult to conceive; as difficult indeed in general, as it would be in particular, if one were to assert that the capture of Burgoyne's army by General



Gates, and Cornwallis's by General Green, were owing to Charles Fox and Edmund Burke. Other causes, both physical and moral, are easily discovered for these two events and the general success of the Americans. Men *will* fight with the greatest vigour for their liberties, real or imagined, or whatever else warmly interests them. Men *can* fight with much greater advantage where they do know the country than where they do not. If America was conquerable by England, it must be by the men and money of England. These were under the direction of Government, through the majority in Parliament. Whatever troops were proposed by Ministry for any destination, whatever money was said to be necessary for their equipment and maintenance was granted. They had the choice of the commanders, and it was their own fault if they chose improper persons. Strange would it be if Opposition eloquence was to be the cause which rendered all those advantages ineffectual!

The cause which Burke so powerfully espoused, had, besides Johnson, some able literary opponents, and, besides himself, some able literary defenders. He, of political antagonists, between whom and Burke there was the greatest degree of contention, was Doctor Tucker. That gentleman, Dean of Gloucester and Prebend of Bristol, had made commerce a principal object of his study, had distinguished himself by several ingenious publications on trade, and had turned his attention to the contest arising between America and her mother country owing to the revenue laws. Doctor Tucker had asserted that the opposition to the stamp-act had encouraged the Americans to resistance. His opinion had drawn forth the severe animadversion of Burke in his speech on American taxation. 'This,' says he, 'has formerly appeared in print, in a regular volume, from an advocate of that faction, (court favourites) a Doctor Tucker. This Doctor Tucker is already a Dean, and his earnest labours in this vineyard will, I suppose, raise him to a bishop-

ric. But this assertion too, just like the rest, is false.' The idea, that a Dean would serve the Court in order to become a Bishop, was certainly derogatory to the clerical character. Doctor Tucker disavowed so corrupt motives, in a letter addressed to Mr. Burke.

In that letter he endeavoured to draw Mr. Burke's character, as a speaker and a writer, in the following words: 'My only difficulty,' says he, 'is to state your meaning with accuracy and precision. Not that you yourself are unable to express your own thoughts with the utmost clearness, as well as energy, but you are unwilling; for you excel in the art of ambiguous expressions, *i. e.* in giving one sense to your readers, and reserving another to yourself, if called upon to defend what you have said. You excel, I say, in this art, perhaps the most of any man living. Sometimes you express more than you mean, and at other times less; but at all times you have one general end in view, viz. to amuse with tropes and

figures, and great swelling words, your audience or your readers, and not to let them see your drift and intention till you have drawn your net around them.' That Burke could express himself with great ambiguity, and involve his meaning in tropes and figures, is undoubtedly true: he could speak or write in any style he chose: but this speech, to which Dr. Tucker refers, is as perspicuous as any speech that could be written, as an impartial reader must immediately perceive. The passage respecting Tucker himself is as clear as any in the whole speech, and without a trope or figure from the beginning to the end of it. Burke's allegation is simply this: Tucker asserts, that the opposition in Parliament to the stamp-act caused the disturbances in America. 'This assertion is false. In all the papers which have loaded your table, in all the vast crowd of verbal witnesses that appeared at your bar—witnesses which were indiscriminately produced from both sides of the house, not the least hint of such a cause of disturbance has ever appeared.'

Burke's meaning here is obvious, and perfectly free from the studied ambiguity imputed to him by the Dean: plainer or more precise language cannot be found. His conjecture also about Tucker's motives, whether just or not, is certainly so expressed as to be very intelligible. It would appear that the Dean, who is himself a very vigorous and precise reasoner when he chuses, here, instead of speaking directly to the point, the primary causes of the disturbances in America, and to Burke's particular attack on his arguments, turns aside to irrelative observations on Burke's general mode of expression.

Some months after this reply, when, at the general election, a great body of the Bristol voters requested (as has been said) Burke to stand candidate, Dr. Tucker exerted himself to oppose his success. In this opposition he co-operated with Lord Nugent, who was the friend of Tucker, and inimical to the party that supported Burke. The Dean now proposed a plan, differing

on the one hand from the conciliatory intention of Burke, on the other from the coercive plans of Ministry. This was, a total separation of the mother country from the colonies; a proposition attacked in Johnson's ministerial 'Taxation no Tyranny,' and mentioned with the most slighting contempt in Burke's Speech on Conciliation. 'Another plan has indeed been started, that of giving up the colonies; but it met so slight a reception, that I do not think myself obliged to dwell a great while upon it. It is nothing but a little sally of anger, like the frowardness of peevish children; who, when they cannot get all they would have, are resolved to have nothing at all.' From the event it appears, that even a total separation would have been more fortunate for us without hostilities, than a plan of coercion, which, after a long and expensive war, was to end with that separation. The event has justified the anticipation of Dean Tucker's sagacity.

The Minister proposed a bill to prohibit all trade and commerce with the United Colonies, with severe penalties against those who should transgress the law; and commissioners to enforce its observance. One of the ablest supporters of the proposition was Mr. Wedderburne, who reasoned with an ingenuity that few could equal. Burke opposed the motion with his usual ability, as of the greatest detriment to Britain, and ineffectual against America. ‘When the colonies,’ said he, ‘found they would not be supplied by this country, they would go to other markets. Britain would lose a great source of wealth, with little annoyance to the colonies, and to the gain of foreign nations. Besides future trade, it would be injurious as to the past, as great debts were owing to the British merchants from the colonies; and if all commerce was prohibited, an immediate stop would be put to payments; that thus merchants would be ruined without the cause of Government being advanced. The bill was retrospective, for by it the Minister inflicted punishment

for acts thought innocent when committed. Our Saviour sent his Apostles to teach and proclaim peace to all nations ; but the political Apostles to be sent out by the Minister would be harbingers of civil war, in all its most horrid and hideous forms, accompanied by fire, sword, and famine. Fox also made a strenuous opposition to the bill, but it availed nothing ; it was passed into a law. As this scheme was alledged to be contrived to starve America, and imputed to a Scotchman, it gave rise to many jokes. Wilkes, speaking of this bill, and perhaps also alluding to the slenderness of the Solicitor's person, called him *Starvation Wedderburne*. Mr. Dundas distinguished himself on this question, by his plain, strong reasoning ; and though somewhat laughed at for his pronunciation by those that attended to sound more than to sense, was heard with great attention by the leading men of Opposition, as well as by his own party. Whatever jokes he underwent on account of his broad Scotch, no one, that looked in his face could, on that ground, call him STAR-



VATION [HARRY. Mr. David Hartley proposed a conciliatory bill, somewhat different in detail from Burke's, but on the same general principles,—the abandonment of taxation, and the repeal of the obnoxious laws. Burke supported this bill, but to no effect.

All attempts being unavailing to prevent the continuance of the war, its conduct next became a subject of animadversion. In the discussion of this subject Fox took the lead. The Americans, he contended, had been successful in the preceding campaign ; and that their success must have been owing either to the weakness and inadequacy of the ministerial plans, or to the misconduct or misfortune of the military and naval commanders ; and therefore moved an inquiry, as the means of fixing the blame, if there was any, or ascertaining if there was not. ' Admitting,' said Mr. Fox, ' the coercion of America to be right, the question is about the means. The means have not hitherto answered the end : we must inquire

to what that has been owing, that we may hereafter either employ better means or apply them more vigorously. If we wish to subdue America let us see how it is to be done; and for that purpose, what has till now prevented our progress.'

Fox pressed the necessity of an inquiry with such force, that the Ministry would not answer him directly, alledging this was not the proper time.

A petition being presented against the prohibitory bill from the West-India merchants, for the immense loss that must accrue to them by the interclusion of commerce with America, Burke shewed himself completely master of the West-India trade, and entered into a very accurate detail of the various articles of traffic between the Islands and the Colonies. Finding that the Ministry paid no regard to the petition, or to any information tending to shew the hurtfulness of the contest with America, he proposed the following ironical resolution:

‘ That it is necessary and proper to come to a resolution, that evidence concerning the state of America, the temper of the people there, and the probable resolutions of an act now depending, is unnecessary to this house, this house being already sufficiently acquainted with these matters.’ When we recollect the obstinacy with which Ministry refused to listen to any representations in favour of America, or to examine evidence on the subject, we must allow that the irony was fair. In discussing this question, both parties went over the whole grounds of the American dispute: the Ministers declared themselves convinced that the provincials would yield on the first appearance of the great armament then preparing against them, and avowed that nothing short of unconditional submission would satisfy Government. Burke persisted in supporting his uniform opinion to the contrary: and from the treasures of his historical knowledge quoted examples of the fate of armaments sent to a distant country, and dwelt on the destruction of the fleet and army of

the Athenians at Syracuse. Among many instances of the successful resistance of men fighting for their liberty, he entered at large into that of the United Provinces, against which forces were not to be sent at the distance of three thousand miles, but from their neighbourhood, forces much more numerous and equally disciplined, and against a much inferior body of people to the Americans, both in number and resources.

Burke is believed to be the author, or at least the reviser of various pamphlets and essays not avowed by him, censuring the measures of Government. It is certain that many of the writings on that side contain arguments that had been used by Burke.

The Ministerial writers were more numerous than the Opposition, but less able. Except Johnson, Dr. Fergusson, Dean Tucker, and Mr. Baron, the writers for Ministry were mostly men of inconsiderable talents. Dr. Fergusson's pamphlet contained the most ingenious reasoning: Mr.

Baron's account of the state of ancient colonies shewed much information, but did not afford either new or strong arguments ; the question not being how ancient states treated their colonies, but how it was right and expedient for Great Britain to treat her colonies in the existing circumstances. A history made its appearance about this time, which, with a considerable degree of intrinsic merit, had the extrinsic advantage of being on a subject analogous to the great matter in dispute: Watson's History of Philip II. comprehending the rise, progress, and successful issue of the assertion of liberty by the Low Countries, and shewing in detail, from recent example, what Burke so frequently pressed on the attention of the house—the energy with which men, even before not accustomed to war, fight in vindication of what either are or they think their rights.

Although Burke was not successful in his great object, the prevention of the American war, he exerted his powers to endeavour to

lessen its expensiveness. His details on this subject were very correct, and very important, giving a most exact account of what might have been spent, and what was spent ; shewing, that the Minister gave contracts, to answer parliamentary purposes, on terms much worse for Government than some would have offered. On the subject of expence, as on every other, he was the oracle that was consulted by his party. There might be among the Opposition several men equal to him in some things, but none in all. In close logical deduction he was, no doubt, equalled by Camden ; in precision by Dunning, in foreign information by Shelburne, in animated eloquence by Chatham ; in strength of reasoning, he, or no man, exceeded Charles Fox : but, on the whole, no man of Opposition, in either house, equalled, or nearly equalled, Edmund Burke ; and if we were even to take the two ablest men away from the Opposition during the American war ; if Burke and Fox had been neutral, the balance of talents would still have been in favour of the Whig

party. In the upper house there were three men of very great talents on the one side, and one on the other. Camden had no equal among the friends of Ministry except Mansfield, whom it is evident he fully matched in logical reasoning, although he fell short of him in graceful oratory, in fascinating and persuasive eloquence; and certainly surpassed him in the knowledge of the constitution. Chatham and Shelburne had no equals, except the same great law lord; nor were there any of the ministerial members of the House of Commons, whom any one, that knew the history and character of the times, would think of placing on a footing with Chatham and Camden. But when to such men we add Burke and Fox, where were their equals to be found?

Highly as I admire the genius of Burke, yet I have repeatedly had occasion to express an opinion, in which I find I have the happiness to concur with many admirers of that personage:—that the literary and philosophical efforts of the sage are of greater

benefit to society than his parliamentary exhibitions; and that more good would have accrued to the world from the exclusive exertion of his powers in discovering truth, and teaching wisdom in the closet, than in the senate. Conversing on this subject with my venerable friend, Mr. Murphy, it was with much pleasure I saw that my sentiments were sanctioned by that veteran leader in genius, taste, and erudition. He told me that the day after Mr. Burke's first speech in the house, in 1765, an acute and able gentleman, who had been in the gallery, meeting with him (Mr. Murphy), the subject of their conversation, as that of most others in the metropolis, was the maiden speech. The gentleman in question, observed to Mr. Murphy, ' I concur in every praise that can be bestowed on the eloquent oration; but I think Mr. Burke's talents might be otherwise applied to greater advantage.'—' In what way?' ' Let him have an ample revenue, provided he retires from public life, and exerts his extraordi-



nary powers in writing for the instruction of mankind.\*

Indeed, in Parliament, Mr. Burke's principal exertions were rather those of a philosopher than an active senator. Having lately studied the history of Mr. Fox more particularly than was necessary when I wrote the former edition, I find in his measures and conduct, during the American war, much more of the practical and active statesman ; in Mr. Burke, the law-giver and philosopher. The legislative measures proposed by Opposition, the various plans of conciliation, reform of expenditure, and other schemes founded upon vast accuracy of detail, comprehensive views, and a generalizing mind, were the offsprings of Mr. Burke's genius. Discussions of executorial plans, and their execution ; inquiries concerning specific measures and conduct, came chiefly from Mr. Fox. Mr. Burke,

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\* I had not heard the anecdote above recited in sufficient time to bring it in at its proper place.

watching over legislation, might be called the law-giver, and Mr. Fox, over executive measures and conduct, the statesman of Opposition. This is a difference of department which I am convinced a careful student of the history of these two great men, during the Administration of Lord North, will find to have actually obtained.

Although Burke adhered closely to a party, he by no means went every length with its most violent members. Mr. Wilkes made a motion for a Reform in Parliament, which Burke did not think seasonable in time of war. Lord North treated the subject with an unbecoming levity.

Burke proposed this session a very humane bill, 'to prevent the inhuman custom of plundering ships wrecked on the coast of Great Britain, and for the farther relief of ships in distress on the said coast.' At first Ministry did not seem averse to it, but at last it was thrown out by a considerable majority.

Although the American war had been demonstrated by the ablest reasoners, both in and out of Parliament, to be unjust and inexpedient ; and although its effects were severely felt by the manufacturing and trading towns, in many parts of the country it was extremely popular. No pains were spared by Ministers to make it pass for a war to maintain the just rights, and the most momentous interests of Britain. It was inculcated by the Court, that if we should succeed in coercing America, we should receive so great a revenue from that country, as to make an important diminution of taxes. The belief, that the coercion of the colonies tended to lessen the burthens at home, made numbers well affected to the war. The grandees connected with the Court contributed their efforts to spread this spirit. Many of the inferior gentry took it for granted, especially in those parts in which the remains of feudal notions gave more than the constitutional weight to the nobility, adopted the opinions which they found embraced by Lords and

Dukes, and concurred in stigmatizing as rebels every one who opposed the plans of Administration. A considerable part of the trading interest saw the prospect of contracts and other profits of war. The pulpits, too often the vehicles of popular delusion, mindless of the meek and peaceful doctrines, precepts, and examples of him whom they professed to obey and follow, thundered out imprecations of vengeance against the defenders of their liberties. If any of the number, instead of calling upon God to hurl down destruction, instead of beseeching infinite Goodness to become the agent of malignity, in the true spirit of morality, piety, and Christianity, prayed for peace between the mother country and her colonies, 'to turn the hearts of the parents to the children, and the children to the parents,' he was sure to be reviled as a rebel. The BEST INFORMED AND ABLEST men, however, in all parts of the country (except those by possession or expectation linked with the Court or courtiers) reprobated the

war with America. But if the informed and the able could reason, the ignorant and the weak could rail. Those who could not refute the arguments of a Chatham, a Fox, and a Burke, were at no loss for opprobrious names. They styled the supporters of liberty, and the enemies of war, Yankees, Republicans, Cromwellians, and Levellers. Burke was peculiarly obnoxious, because he had been (of very able men) the longest, most constant, and persevering opposer of American taxation and coercion.

The common talk among courtiers and their dependents in town, the nobility and their retainers in the country, was, that the Americans were rebels, and that the rebellion was owing to Opposition leaders. Burke was not moved, by the attacks of servility and selfishness, from the road of patriotism; nor, by the frivolous defamation of ignorance and folly, from the measures of wisdom; measures unhappily not adopted by his country.

His enlarged mind did not enter into all the narrow views even of his own party. When Mr. Thomas Townshend, a zealous Whig, expressed his disapprobation of pensions given to Tory writers, and among others even that of Johnson, Burke defended the propriety of that pension as a tribute to merit of the highest kind, not a purchase of mean service.

Burke was also very liberal in his encomiums on Lord North's general abilities and dispositions, however he disliked his political measures. He used to say he possessed one of the best heads and one of the best hearts in the world; he thought that, in point of sterling wit, he excelled all men. This regard was reciprocal; there was no man whom Lord North so greatly admired, and very few whom he was privately more desirous to oblige. Burke often applied to him in behalf of his friends, and never in vain, if no political interest interfered: 'There is, my Lord,' he would say, 'an office vacant that would just suit a very able

and worthy friend of mine ; if you have no parliamentary interest to answer, do let him have the place.' ' In this case I am happy, my dear Mr. Burke, I can gratify you.' It indeed was not surprising that two of the ablest and most amiable men in the nation should cherish private esteem and regard, notwithstanding political opposition. On the other hand, there were some of his political associates that he privately disliked ; one nobleman, in particular, generally accused of duplicity, he always carefully avoided as a JESUIT.

The campaign of 1776 was more successful than the preceding, as every political reader must remember. The advantages, however, were in process, but not in result ; they did not seem to bring the subjugation of America any nearer than it was. The Americans were at first somewhat disheartened by the successes of the British ; but finding that they either did not or could not pursue their victories, resumed their spirits. Resentment also contributed to

this effect. Unconditional submission was required of them, and peace offered to those only who surrendered at discretion. Finding themselves placed on a footing quite different from other British subjects, and that they were declared rebels, because they would not submit to taxation but by themselves and their representatives, they resolved to assert their independence. They considered protection and allegiance as relative duties precisely commensurate, and contended that the King's refusal to attend to their petitions and to redress their grievances was an exclusion of the colonies from his protection; and as protection and allegiance were subjects of barter, if the one was withheld, the other could not be granted. The Congress, in conformity with the instructions of the delegates from their constituents, declared America independent. After detailing their various grievances, they concluded, ' that on account of the King of Great Britain having refused to redress them, the inhabitants of the United Colonies were thereby discharged and absolved from all allegiance



and obedience to him.' This declaration was ratified by most of the provincial assemblies. A pamphlet, entitled, 'Common Sense,' published by Thomas Paine, afterwards so noted in Europe, contributed very much to the ratification of the independence of America. It was written with that plain and simple energy which he can exert on any subject *within the reach of his knowledge*, and which makes even sophistry impressive on untutored minds, that judge more from the strength of the language than the truth of the arguments.

Proposals for peace were made by the British commanders to the Americans. The Americans, having once asserted their independence, were determined to preserve it, and refused to admit any proposals but as an independent state.

When Parliament met, a motion was made by Lord John Cavendish on the grounds of one of the proclamations by the Howes, offering pardon to all Americans who should

return to their allegiance, and offering to such a revision of the obnoxious measures. Lord John proposed, that the house should enter into a committee for the revisal of the acts. This measure was supported by the utmost ability of Burke, who, it must be confessed, was frequently led by party to greater lengths than impartial judgment could approve, though never to extremities. He certainly could not have expected that the motion would have produced any good effect. The Americans had made no overtures for conciliation, and refused to admit any but on a ground to which British acts could not apply. What purpose could it serve to make or unmake laws for a country declaring itself totally unconnected with the enactors? Besides, as war *was actually commenced*, whether it was originally right or wrong, the object was peace on the best terms that could be had. Concession on one side, without any on the other, is not the way to procure honourable terms of peace. Such a concession would have tended to increase the demands of the Ame-

ricans, instead of inducing them to come forward with reasonable offers.

Lord North proposed two bills respecting America: one for issuing out letters of marque, another for a suspension of the habeas corpus as far as the Americans were concerned. This was called the treason and piracy bill, on the ground that the Americans were British subjects, and consequently in fighting against Britain were guilty of treason; and if in privateers, or any other ships attacking or taking vessels belonging to Britain, must be guilty of piracy. This latter bill was very ably opposed by Mr. Dunning, on the ground that nothing short of a rebellion in the heart of the kingdom existing, or apprehended, justified the suspension of this important law; that the power of detaining persons on mere suspicion, without bringing them to a trial, invested Ministers with a dictatorial authority inconsistent with personal liberty and security. Burke and some others of the leading members of Opposition

withdrew from the house when this or any question respecting America was discussed. They did attend on ordinary business, but immediately after that was dispatched retired. They said, they were tired with opposing reason and argument to superior power and numbers. This secession was not approved of by Opposition in general, and indeed does not appear justifiable. Eloquence, as Burke observed on another occasion, though it might not procure a majority to members of Opposition, was not without its effect, in modifying measures of Ministry. Indeed a very recent instance shewed, that as the late bill had, in consequence of the masterly discussion it underwent, been modified and defined in a manner it would not have been without that opposition, if the bill was bad, the opposition on the whole did good.

The object of this life not being to support any hypothesis concerning Burke's consistency or inconsistency, but impartially to narrate facts, and at the close to form a

summary of the character, I think it my duty to state truth, whatever effect the statement may have.

Secession from Parliament being uncommon, though not unprecedented, Burke considered it as incumbent on him to justify his conduct. He wrote an address to the king, stating the motives of the seceders.

The address has been printed in several of the newspapers, and contains Burke's notions respecting the British constitution, and the various great events by which it has been effected. As it never has been avowedly published as Burke's, for the sake of those readers who may not have seen the papers in which it was inserted, I shall endeavour to give the substance, with extracts from the most material parts.

The justificatory memorial sets out with representing to his Majesty the distracted state of affairs. Our situation it imputes to the misconduct of Government. The al-

ledge; misconduct, after considerable detail, it generalizes into the following short description. ' That grievance is as simple in its nature, and as level to the most ordinary understanding, as it is powerful in affecting the most languid passions. It is an attempt made to dispose of the property of a whole people, without their consent. Your Majesty's subjects in the colonies, possessing the ordinary faculties of mankind, know, that to live under such a plan of government, is not to live in a state of freedom. The sense of a whole people, most gracious Sovereign, never ought to be contemned by wise and beneficent rulers. When no means are possessed of power to awe, or to oblige, the strongest ties which connect mankind in every relation, social and civil, and which teach them mutually to respect each other, are broken. Independence from that moment virtually exists. In this state of things, we were of opinion, that satisfaction ought instantly to be given, or that, at least, the punishment of the disorder ought to be attended with the re-

dress of the grievances. Because, whenever a disorder arises from, and is directly connected with a grievance, to confine ourselves to the punishment of the disorder, is to declare against the reason and justice of the complaint. The methods recommended and followed, as infallible means of restoring peace and order, we could not consider as at all adapted to their purposes. We could not conceive, when disorders had arisen from the complaint of one violated right, that to violate every other was the proper means of quieting exasperated minds. Recourse was had to force, and we saw a force sent out, enough to menace liberty, but not to awe resistance.' He afterwards goes over the various measures of Government, both of coercion and conciliation, shewing both to be inadequate: affirms, that in the barbarity of the Germans and the atrocity of the American savages there was the infliction of misery without the advancement of conquest. He proceeds to the arbitrary doctrines which were becoming prevalent, and, as a contrast to these, boldly describes

the principles of the revolution, and of the establishment of the Brunswick family on the throne of England.

‘ Sire, your throne cannot stand secure upon the principles of unconditional submission, or passive obedience,—on powers exercised without the concurrence of the people to be governed,—on acts made in defiance of their prejudices and habits,—on acquiescence procured by foreign mercenary troops, and secured by standing armies. They may possibly be the foundation of other thrones: they must be the subversion of yours.

‘ It was not to passive principles in our ancestors that we owe the honour of appearing before a Sovereign, who cannot feel that he is a prince without knowing that we ought to be free. The revolution is a departure from the ancient course of the descent of this monarchy—the people re-entered into their original rights; and it was not because a positive law authorized



the act, but because the freedom and safety of the subject, the origin and causes of all laws, required a proceeding paramount and superior to them. At that ever-memorable and instructive period, the letter of the law was superseded in favour of the substance of liberty. To the free choice, therefore, of the people, without either King or Parliament, we owe that happy establishment, of which both King and Parliament were regenerated.

This representation to the Sovereign, which may be very justly styled a remonstrance, did not meet with the approbation of other chief men of the party. He therefore desisted from his intention.

Anxious to do justice to the subject of this narrative, I think it my duty to mark the occasional excess of his zeal for liberty, and of other beneficial sentiments, as well as his general principles: an excess leading to evil, as their wise and moderate operation led to good. His principles were indeed

those of the most enlarged, liberal, and practical philosophy ; but in his application of them he was not unfrequently misled by fancy, or transported by passion, to notions, expressions, and conduct, which his understanding, when unbiassed, could by no means approve. Whatever his ardent mind pursued, it pursued with its full force.—No understanding could take a wider or more comprehensive survey of the connections and relations of objects ; yet his eager contemplation of whatever engaged his attention, or interested his affections, made him frequently overlook important parts of the prospect. If he viewed liberty, he would sometimes omit to turn his eyes to order ; if order, to liberty.

Burke laid similar sentiments before the public, in a ‘ Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol,’ his constituent city.

Were we to consider the speech of an orator as we do the theorem of a mathematician, as stating a proposition either to be

true or false, and by a chain of intermediations proving the asserted truth or falsehood; and to consider the speech as good or bad accordingly, as we should the demonstrations, many speeches of the highest celebrity, the result of very great talents and knowledge, would be in no estimation. Cicero's oration in defence of Milo does not make out the case. He assumes that Clodius intended to attack Milo; and from that assumption of intention assumes that he actually did attack: from the two assumptions he infers the killing of Clodius to be justifiable homicide in self-defence. There is no evidence to support either of the assumptions. The aggression not being proved to have been on the side of Clodius, Milo could not be proved to have killed him in self-defence. Cicero therefore does not demonstrate that *which was to be demonstrated*. The orator, however, is admired not for MAKING OUT THE CASE, but for the ingenuity of the deductions from assumed premises, and for the pathetic sentiments, for displaying a very strong understanding and

a very feeling heart. The same observation applies to many of the orations of other eminent speakers: we must often consider them rather as exhibitions of the general ability, knowledge, or feelings of the author, than as evictions of the truths undertaken to be proved.

If we consider Burke's 'Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol,' and estimate its excellence by its fitness to justify his secession from Parliament, his reasons do not amount to a justification.

But although the state of the country, and the measures of Government, even if they were as bad as Burke represents, do not prove that he was right in withdrawing his assistance, the letter is a fresh instance of his wonderful powers.

In examining the merits of the habeas corpus suspension, from the measure he went to its proposers, and took a wide view of the whole of their conduct on American

affairs. After detailing the various proceedings of Government, their injustice, inexpediency, and hurtful effects, he rises to a generalization of the principles to which they have been owing ; and the consequences, not to the colonies only but to the spirit of our legislation,—to law, to manners, and to morals.

In this, as in all his works, he shews his aversion to the application of unqualified metaphysical principles to affairs. Experience, and not abstraction, according to Burke, ought to be the guide in practice and in conduct. Government, he conceived, ought to be accommodated to the known opinions and sentiments of the people: if, under the same empire, provinces, or classes of men of very different notions, should be placed, that their polity ought to be diversified accordingly. ‘ Instead,’ says he, ‘ of troubling our understandings with speculations concerning the unity of empire, and the identity or distinction of legislative powers, it was our duty, in all soberness, to

conform our government to the character and circumstances of the several people who composed the mighty and strangely diversified mass. I never was wild enough to conceive, that one method would serve for the whole; that the natives of Hindostan and those of Virginia could be ordered in the same manner; or that the Cutchery court and the grand jury of Salem could be regulated on a similar plan. I was persuaded that government was a practical thing, made for the happiness of mankind; and not to furnish out a spectacle of uniformity, to gratify the schemes of visionary politicians.

In speaking of the tendency of ministerial counsels to arbitrary power, he attacks Hume as too friendly to unlimited monarchy. He quotes an observation from his essays in support of this assertion—‘ Mr. Hume,’ he says, ‘ will not be singular in telling us, that the felicity of mankind is no more disturbed by it (absolute power) than by earthquakes or thunder, or the other more unusual accidents of Nature.’

Burke\* was prejudiced against Hume.— That Hume was friendly to despotism, is an opinion more consistent with a cursory reading of his works than an accurate perusal. Where our great historian is favourable to the house of Stuart, he appears rather to palliate than justify the conduct of its princes. He contends, that it was *natural* for them to endeavour to retain the powers which their immediate predecessors had enjoyed, not that it was *just*; although, from the coolness of his temper, and the profoundness of his understanding, he disapproved of the religious fanaticism of the Puritans, he acknowledges that, as friends to liberty, they rendered their country important services. He even commends their exertions, as far as they tended to the restriction of unlimited power, and to the establishment of such a constitution as we now possess. He attacks their political efforts only when they tend to the subversion of the monarchy. Their theolo-

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\* The reason of this prejudice shall be hereafter shewn.

gical absurdities he certainly ridicules, as he also does the high church bigotry. He exposes the superstitious mummeries of Laud, as well as the enthusiastic phrenzy of James Naylor or Praise-God-Barebone. He justifies resistance in cases of great oppression. He approves of Hambden. His philosophical mildness added to his wisdom in reprobating turbulence; but he as severely condemns oppression, and stigmatizes those parliaments which were the tools of despotism. His expanded mind is not particularly anxious to make England appear to have possessed a great share of liberty at very early periods: at the same time he allows, during the Saxon reigns, there was a considerable portion. He does not deem precedent necessary to establish our rights to freedom. The existence of a House of Commons previous to the time of Edward I. was not the antecedent from which such a logician as Hume educes the consequent, that the people ought, by themselves or their delegates, to have a share in the legislature. According to this philosophical



dress of the grievances. Because, whenever a disorder arises from, and is directly connected with a grievance, to confine ourselves to the punishment of the disorder, is to declare against the reason and justice of the complaint. The methods recommended and followed, as infallible means of restoring peace and order, we could not consider as at all adapted to their purposes. We could not conceive, when disorders had arisen from the complaint of one violated right, that to violate every other was the proper means of quieting exasperated minds. Recourse was had to force, and we saw a force sent out, enough to menace liberty, but not to awe resistance.' He afterwards goes over the various measures of Government, both of coercion and conciliation, shewing both to be inadequate: affirms, that in the barbarity of the Germans and the atrocity of the American savages there was the infliction of misery without the advancement of conquest. He proceeds to the arbitrary doctrines which were becoming prevalent, and, as a contrast to these, boldly describes

the principles of the revolution, and of the establishment of the Brunswick family on the throne of England.

‘ Sire, your throne cannot stand secure upon the principles of unconditional submission, or passive obedience,—on powers exercised without the concurrence of the people to be governed,—on acts made in defiance of their prejudices and habits,—on acquiescence procured by foreign mercenary troops, and secured by standing armies. They may possibly be the foundation of other thrones: they must be the subversion of yours.

‘ It was not to passive principles in our ancestors that we owe the honour of appearing before a Sovereign, who cannot feel that he is a prince without knowing that we ought to be free. The revolution is a departure from the ancient course of the descent of this monarchy—the people re-entered into their original rights; and it was not because a positive law authorized

observer and surveyor of the progress of man, rational liberty grew and increased with knowledge and wisdom. If Burke had not been incensed against Hume, it is probable he would have considered the general scope, rather than particular passages of his writings.

In speaking of the effects that civil war would produce on the manners of the people, he draws the following glowing picture:—  
 ‘ Civil wars strike deepest of all into the manners of a people. They vitiate their politics, they corrupt their morals, they pervert even the natural taste and relish of equity and justice. By teaching us to consider our fellow-citizens in an hostile light, the whole body of our nation becomes gradually less dear to us : the very names of affection and kindred, which were the bond of charity whilst we agreed, become new incentives to hatred and rage, when the communion of our country is dissolved. We may flatter ourselves that we shall not fall into this misfortune, but we have no charter

of exemption, that I know of, from the ordinary frailties of our nature.'

The Earl of Abingdon wrote a pamphlet of considerable ability and merit, in reply to Burke's letter, at least to that part of it which apologized for his secession from Parliament. There was also another respondent. The very celebrated letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, one of the ablest performances of Edmund Burke, was answered by Edward Topham, Esq.!

Johnson disapproved very much of this letter of Burke; he particularly ridiculed his definition of liberty. 'That,' said Burke, 'is freedom to every practical purpose, which the people think so.' Johnson said, 'I will let the King of France govern me on those conditions, for it is to be governed just as I please.' Whatever it may to a Tory, the definition will not appear ridiculous to a Whig, nor indeed to an impartial neutralist. Liberty is one of the means of happiness. Happiness depends very much

on opinion. The belief, that I enjoy that means of happiness, has to me, as long as it lasts, the same effect as the reality: the more the mind advances in knowledge the more will belief follow reality; but it is the opinion, not its justness, that constitutes the enjoyment.

Burke does not differ more from his political opponent, Johnson, than from his coadjutor, Price. If he disapproves of arbitrary bigotry on the one hand, he scouts metaphysical refinements of republicanism on the other. 'There are,' says he, 'people who have split and anatomized the doctrine of free government, as if it were an abstract question concerning metaphysical liberty and necessity, and not a matter of moral prudence and natural feeling. SPECULATIONS ARE LET LOOSE, AS DESTRUCTIVE TO ALL AUTHORITY, as the former (slavish doctrines) are to all freedom; and every government is called *tyranny and usurpation which is not formed on their fancies. In this manner the stirrers up of this contention are cor-*

*rupting our understandings; they are endeavouring to tear up, along with practical liberty, all the foundations of human society, all equity and justice, religion and order.* In these, and other observations of the same tendency, Burke displays the power of his foresight, in perceiving what would be the bitterness of the fruit of doctrines then only budding. In the wild theories at that time beginning to be framed, he saw and reprobated the seeds of the *Rights of Man*. He evidently alluded to 'Price's Civil Liberty' and Priestley's first Principles of Government.' Price felt the allusion so much, that a considerable portion of an introduction to an edition of his 'Observations' is employed in an attempt to refute Burke. How superficial examiners of the writings of both must those be, who assert that Dr. Price and Mr. Burke, in maintaining the cause of the Americans, discover the same political principles! There is not in any of his writings on the French Revolution to be found principles more opposite to the doctrines of the Rights of Man than in this letter.

The Annual Register has been generally ascribed to Burke; but from internal evidence I should apprehend, that although it might be directed by him, he did not regularly take a great share in the composition.

Although Burke did not regularly compose any part of that production, yet when a subject, either literary or political, of very great importance, occurred, he frequently contributed his efforts. This year brought forward a work on new subjects of physical and moral nature:—Robertson's History of America. The account of that production of industry and genius, given in the Annual Register, bears the marks of Burke's philosophical criticism. It shews an extent of moral and political views, similar to that which his writings usually display. This examination does not teem with imagery, but is what Burke's compositions on subjects of mere disquisition frequently are, a connected system of observation and deduction.

The same year that brought to the world a serious performance of the first magnitude, produced also a comedy, greatly superior to any of the same class that had appeared since the time of Congreve. The reader must immediately perceive that this description can apply to no work of the present or last age, but the ‘*SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL*.’ Philosophical history and comic poetry, both likely to descend to the latest posterity, as they were both most excellent in their kind, were coeval in their birth. When we take a view of literary talents at this time, we find these realms standing fully as high as in political. In the three great departments of genius,—poetry, history, and philosophy,—the efforts were great, and collectively equal to any that had ever been made in any age or country. There, no doubt, have been individuals of still greater powers than any displayed in these times. There have been brighter luminaries, but never a greater constellation. Indeed men of very extraordinary genius, as is remarked by one of the first of our living philosophers,



In the knowledge of man he was and could be surpassed by none: yet, from the theatre which he chose, his powers and attainments produced much less effect than those of many greatly his inferiors. He narrated, he described, he reasoned, he reflected; his narrations, his descriptions, his reasonings, his reflections, were overpowered by ministerial majorities. Had Socrates devoted those exertions, and that time, to unavailing contests in public assemblies, which he employed in communicating the purest and sublimest morals; had Johnson betowed on parliamentary contention that force and labour which gave to the world the Rambler, the Idler, the Lives of Addison, of Pope, of Savage, Dryden, Milton, and the Preface to Shakespeare; had Hume spent in the House of Commons, and in political factions, those hours which produced the **History of England**, which unfolded the progress of man from barbarism to civilization, which raised an illustrious monument, shewing what was right and wrong, wise and unwise, the loss to society might

have been somewhat equivalent to that which it has sustained from the direction to party of a mind fitted to grasp the universe.

The executors of Mr. Burke having announced their intention of publishing his letters in a continuous series, I found that an application for such documents would be generally unavailing, as, before my first edition was published it was anticipated. Gentlemen, whose character I highly value, had done me the honour to say, that the perusal of the former edition inspired them with a wish respecting epistolary communications that it was now too late to gratify. I myself rejoice that his letters are in such hands, and ardently long for a publication which will doubtless exhibit the confidential and familiar effusions of a mind, whose literary, philosophical, oratorical, and political efforts, I have made a feeble attempt to sketch and characterize. The few letters which I have had an opportunity of contemplating render me the more eagerly de-

sirous of contemplating more. Whatever he spoke or wrote is, to use a phrase I have quoted in another part of the work, *Burke-all-over*.

A very intimate friendship had subsisted from their early youth between Mr. Burke and Mr. Francis. When the abilities and knowledge of the latter gentleman sent him to India, and raised him to so confidential and important a situation, Mr. Burke, knowing his friendly and benevolent dispositions, recommended to his notice gentlemen of merit about to seek their fortune in India. Among these was Mr. John Bourke, who, by very honourable conduct, had at home forgone pecuniary advantages, which more avarice than honour would have secured to him, and had been obliged to try in India to be more successful than he had been in Europe. Introduced to Mr. Francis, he met with the kindest reception; and in the course of their conversation Mr. Francis had spoken with the warmest affection and highest admiration of their

absent friend, Edmund. Informed of these things by a letter from Mr. Bourke, the subject of my biography wrote a letter to Mr Francis, of which that gentleman has politely and kindly favoured me with a copy.

The letter is dated at that period of his life and exertions which I am now considering ; refers to measures and events of that time ; and presents to us both the head and the heart of the writer. It also shews us how justly he appreciated and highly he valued the gentleman to whom it is addressed.

COPY OF A LETTER FROM EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.  
TO MR. FRANCIS, AT CALCUTTA.

MY DEAR SIR,

*Westminster, 9th June, 1777.*

‘ OUR common friend, John Bourke, informs me that you still retain that kindness which you were so good to express towards me before you left London. This wide disconnected empire will frequently disperse those who are dear to one another ; but, if

this dispersion of their persons does not loosen their regards, it every now and then gives such unexpected opportunities of meeting as almost compensate the pain of separation, and furnishes means of kind offices and mutual services which make even absence and distance the causes of new endearment and continued remembrance. These thoughts occur to me too naturally, as my only comforts in parting with a friend, whom I have tenderly loved, highly valued, and continually lived with, in an union not to be expressed, quite since our boyish years. Indemnify me, my dear Sir, as well as you can, for such a loss, by contributing to the fortune of my friend. Bring him home with you an obliged person and at his ease, under the protection of your opulence. You know what his situation has been, and what things he might have surely kept, and infinitely increased, if he had not those feelings which make a man worthy of fortune, but do not put him in the way of securing it. Remember that he asks those favours which nothing but his sense of honour pre-

vented his having it in his power to bestow. This will be a powerful recommendation to a heart like yours. Let Bengal protect a spirit and rectitude, which are no longer tolerated in England.

‘ I do not know, indeed, that he will visit your kingdom, but if he should, I trust he will find a friend there whose manner of serving him will not be in the style of those who acquit themselves of a burthen. Mr. Bourke’s first views, indeed, are at Madras ; but all India is now closely connected, and your influence and power are such, that you may serve him very materially even there. I will not wrong your friendship by pressing this matter any farther, but it is indeed near to my heart.

‘ I say nothing of your Eastern politics. The affairs of America, which are as important, and more distracted, have almost entirely engrossed the attention which I am able to give to any thing. “ I wished, and

laboured to keep war at a distance ; never having been able to discover any advantage which could be derived from the greatest success ; I never approved of our engaging in it, and I am sure it might have been avoided." The Ministers this year hold out to us the strongest hopes of what they call a victorious campaign. " I am, indeed, ready enough to believe that we shall obtain those delusive advantages, which will encourage us to proceed, but will not bring matters nearer to an happy termination." France gives all the assistance to the colonies which is consistent with the appearance of neutrality. Time is to shew whether she will proceed farther, or whether America can maintain herself in the present struggle, without a more open declaration and more decided effort from that power. At present, the Ministers seem confident that France is resolved to be quiet. If the Court of Versailles be so pacific, I assure you it is in defiance of the wishes and opinions of that whole nation.

‘ Adieu, my dear Sir. Be assured that no person rejoices more sincerely than I do in hearing every circumstance of fortune and honour that attends you. I am, with the most sincere esteem and affection, ever your most faithful and obedient humble servant,

EDMUND BURKE.’

‘ I need not say with what affection John Bourke\* salutes you.’

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\* Of London, a mercantile gentleman and relation of Edmund. Genius appears to belong to the family of the Burkes. Mr. John Bourke’s nephew, Mr. Charles Palmer, of Jamaica, having studied law, by his genius and application is, though only twenty-seven years of age, at the head of his profession; and his younger brother, John, promised to be equally eminent in medicine, but was prematurely cut off soon after his education was finished. Their intellectual powers were formed and directed under the care of Dr. Robert Thomson, of Kensington.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME,





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*Critical Review, March, 1798.*

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